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THE

SOLDIER'S BRIDE,

AND OTHER POEMS.



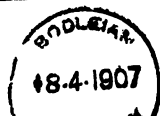
THE
SOLDIER'S BRIDE,
AND OTHER POEMS.

BY
JAMES T. CALDER,
AUTHOR OF SKETCHES FROM JOHN O'GROATS, ETC.

EDINBURGH:
MACLACHLAN, STEWART, & CO.
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J. THOMSON, PRINTER, MILNE SQUARE.



TO THE HONOURABLE
LORD ROBERTSON,
ONE OF THE SENATORS OF THE
COLLEGE OF JUSTICE,
THIS VOLUME OF POEMS
IS DEDICATED,
IN ADMIRATION OF HIS GREAT TALENTS
AND FORENSIC ELOQUENCE,
BY HIS OBEDIENT SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE following Poems were written by the Author during the intervals of an irksome and laborious profession, in the most northern corner of Scotland. Their publication at the present period, may be deemed a rash undertaking, when it is considered that the literary market is glutted with compositions of this kind; and that, since the disappearance from this mortal scene of Byron, Scott, and Campbell, those great luminaries of the poetical hemisphere, even the best productions of our minor poets have attracted comparatively little attention. Notwithstanding this, however, the Author is sanguine enough to hope, that a few of the pieces in this small collection, will be found sufficiently interesting to gratify the

reader of poetry. Be that as it may, the Public is not unjust; and of one thing he is certain, that whatever be the merits of his small volume, the critical judgment of that tribunal will be impartial.

EDINBURGH,
Sept. 17th 1846.

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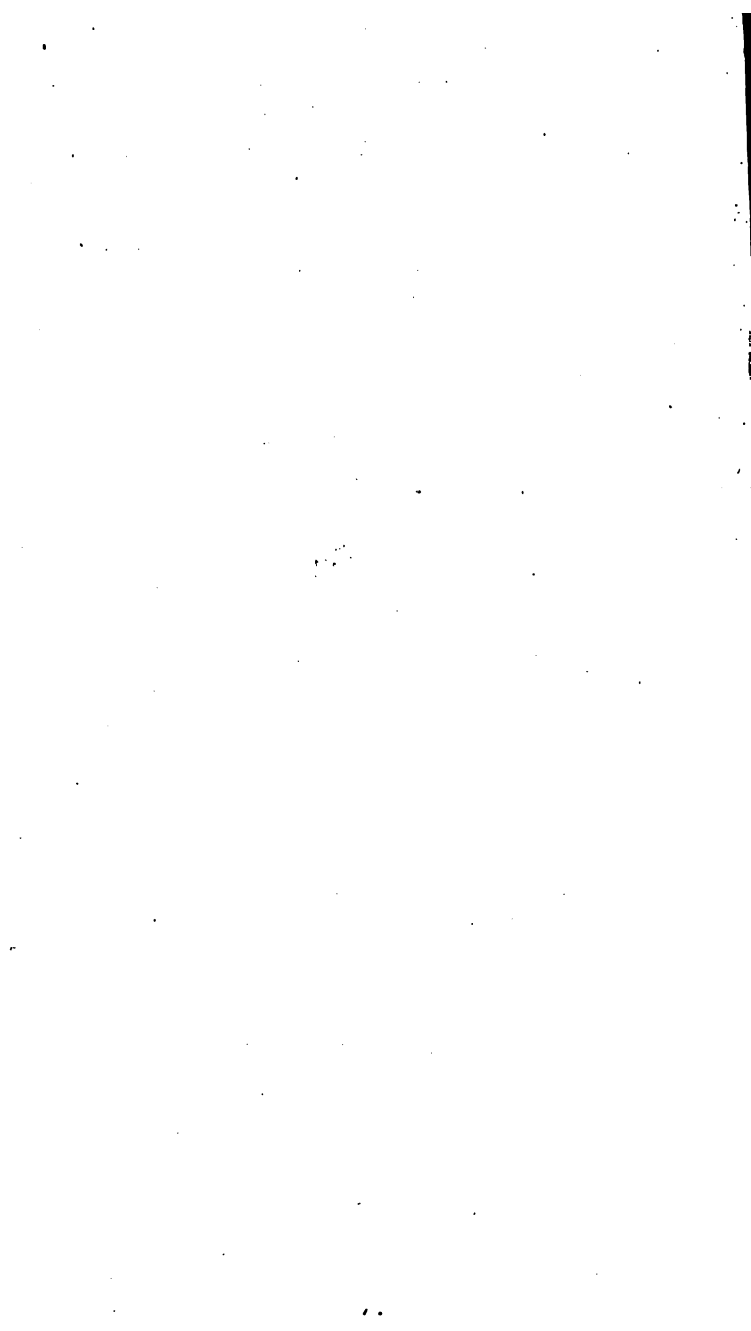
ERRATA.

Page 1, line 6, *for thrilled read trilled*
 75, line 7, *for rung read wrung.*

THE SOLDIER'S BRIDE.

IN

THREE CANTOS.



THE SOLDIER'S BRIDE.

CANTO FIRST.

RETURNING summer with refulgent mien,
Once more revived and brightened up the scene ;
On every side were sights and sounds of mirth,
As if all sorrow had forsook the earth.

Couched in the thorny brake the linnet sweet
Thrilled forth its lay, so soft and exquisite ;
While, ever and anon on pinion proud,
The sky-lark carolled from the fleecy cloud,
Like to a happy spirit love-inspired,
With thrilling bursts of rapture never tired.
Nursed into life by summer's genial breath,
A thousand wild flowers spread o'er mead and
heath ;

And gracing oft the bleakest spot appeared
The " bonny broom " to Scottish song endeared.
Thrown off his wintry garb of white at last,
In which he warred with many a stormy blast,
Morven upreared his giant form to view,
Clothed in his sweetest robe of summer blue.
Even Ocean's self assumed a look more bright,
And round his caverns murmured with delight.
With head upraised above the briny stream
The seal lay basking in the grateful beam.

And, as he winged his flight along the wave,
The wild sea gull a scream of gladness gave.

From Castle Sinclair's lordly turrets high
There is a banner floating on the eye,
And loud and shrill the bagpipe's martial sound
Is waking all the slumbering echoes round.
Before that princely pile have met to-day,
A stately band of youthful warriors gay,
And well they look, all clad in plaid and trews
Of Sinclair tartan with its brilliant hues.
That stately corps the flower of Caithness seem,
Culled from each mountain-strath, and glen, and
stream,

From the rude rocks that stem the Pentland tide,
To where the wild Ord frowns in naked pride ;
A thousand strong, they form a splendid sight,
With dirk and broad-sword all equipped for fight,
And ready at their leader's call to wield
Their warlike weapons on a foreign field.
And, who is he, the leader of that corps,
Whom they so gladly follow and adore?
A chief of noble birth and talents rare,
Sprung from the lordly line of high St. Clair.
How well the beauteous garb of red and green,
Becomes his handsome form and manly mien ;
How gracefully the highland bonnet now
With eagle plumage rests upon his brow ;
A soldier every inch—with sword in hand,
He looks a leader worthy of his band,
Who now all eagerly around him press,
While thus he greets them in a brief address.
“ My brave young friends, your soldierly array,
With proud emotions fills my breast to-day ;

For in your bold undaunted looks I see
Of gallant deeds to come the guarantee.
The Swedish Monarch so renowned in fight,
Who never draws his sword but for the right,
Has sent a courier from his Baltic shore,
To supplicate the aid of our claymore,
Against the Danish and Norwegian foe,
Now linked together for his overthrow ;
And, 'twould with shame the name of Caithness
brand

Should we refuse to him our helping hand.
Is there, I ask, a youth of spirit here,
One breast to whom the voice of fame is dear ?
At home in sluggish indolence would lie
And craven-like ignobly live and die,
When lasting honour may be gained abroad,
In freedom's sacred cause, the cause of God !
These hearty cheers your firm resolve declare,
To follow me, and all my fortunes share,
And loudly say that sooner far than yield,
You'll die like Scotsmen on the battle field.
To-morrow, at high noon, if serve the gale,
Direct for Norway I intend to sail,
And when the pipe and drum their summons sound,
To start with me you'll all be ready found."
He said, and one loud answering cheer was given
From rank to rank that seemed to rend the heaven.

With train of clouds that retinue his way,
And gild his triumph at the close of day,
The sun is hastening down the concave steep,
To shine in other climes beyond the deep ;
Now on the Pentland billow's glowing crest,
His broad and burning disk is seen to rest,

Now lessening to a curve of golden light,
He sinks at once from the spectator's sight.
Earth, sea, and sky, lie hushed without a sound,
As in a trance of adoration bound ;
While, heralding her sister orbs on high,
The Evening Star looks down with placid eye.

O'er yon white beach that fringes Sinclair's Bay,
Now arm in arm a loving couple stray ;
To two fond hearts the time and place how meet,
The dreamy billow murmuring at their feet.
In close and eager converse they appear ;
Why does the lady shed that blinding tear ?
Why o'er her delicate and beauteous brow,
Is thrown that air of pensive sadness now ?
Perhaps the sprightly soldier at her side,
So long her young heart's chiefest joy and pride—
Is soon to leave her for a foreign strand,
The youthful leader of yon gallant band.
'Tis so—and with a voice and look of love,
Whose eloquence the hardest heart might move,
She pleads to go with him across the sea,
To share his lot, whatever that may be,
While he, in terms affectionate and mild,
Thus argues with her 'gainst a scheme so wild.

“ To share my fortunes on a hostile shore !
Nay, dearest Lucy, think of this no more.
Thy tender frame, nursed in the lap of ease,
Would never bear the tossing of the seas,
Much less the hardships of a rude campaign,
With all its dangers and its sights of pain ;
Amid those horrors thou wouldst shrink aghast,
And like a sweet flower perish in the blast ;

Then chase the wild idea from thy mind,
Trust all to heaven, and stay at home resigned."

"Thou conjurest phantoms up by land and sea,
To shake my purpose, but they daunt not me.
Whatever scenes of danger may befall,
My spirit tells me I can bear them all.
I'm but a feeble woman, it is true,
And heretofore life's hardships never knew,
But, in my bosom, weak as I appear,
There beats a heart that is unknown to fear.
Oh! if thou would'st not wish that heart to break,
Let me not pine at home for mercy's sake."

"Believe me, Lucy, when I do avow,
'Tis true regard alone that makes me now
So loth to listen to your wild request,
Though with the deepest tenderness impressed.
In those rude scenes of bloodshed and of strife
Which form the drama of a soldier's life,
Thy presence, love, could only be to me
A constant source of deep anxiety,
And damp my courage when I ought to wield
My glittering falchion in the tented field."

"Nay, George, thou deem'st me weak indeed—
or thou
Would'st ne'er have spoken as thou doest now.
Fear not for me, nor for a moment think
That I would cause thee from thy duty shrink,
Or damp thy zeal, to me however dear,
When in the battle's front thou should'st appear.
I say, again, and say it too with pride,
I bear the spirit of a soldier's bride,

And though I may not join thee in the field,
There is assistance too which I may yield.
Life—even the gayest—has its hours of gloom,
That cross its path like shadows from the tomb.
The bravest soul that e'er drew battle blade,
Need's woman's kindly sympathetic aid ;
And thou too, brave and gallant though thou be,
Wilt lack the presence of a friend like me.
Yes—let me go to cheer thee 'mid thy toil,
On Norway's savage and romantic soil.
I'll soothe thy sorrows when thou art depressed,
And calm thy troubled spirit down to rest ;
And, if thou should'st be wounded in the fight,
Though heaven forbid I e'er should see that
sight,
I'll tend thy sick bed, charm thy pains away,
And be thy kind physician night and day."

" But, dearest Lucy, my true-hearted maid,
If I should fall beneath some hostile blade,
What would become of thee, a stranger left
'Mong savage foes, of thy protector reft ?
Alas for thee ! the very thought indeed,
Doth make my heart with agony to bleed.
Oh ! I intreat thee then to think no more
Of following me to Norway's rugged shore,
Where wild vindictive war his banner rears,
And, if thou dost regard me—dry those tears,
That only grieve my heart, and for thy sake
Would almost tempt me 'gainst my will to break
The faith I've pledged to Sweden's royal lord,—
A coward's deed that would disgrace my sword ;
Nay, should I act so mean and base a part,
Thou would'st thyself despise me in thy heart.

But truce to all unpleasant thoughts like these,
Once more I beg thee keep thy mind at ease,
And let me see thee at our ball to-night,
As heretofore in all thy beauty's light.
'Twould fill my darkling bosom with despair,
If thou, my lovely Lucy, wert not there,
To cheer me with thy smile so kind and true,
One parting kiss, and now till then adieu."

To-night in Castle Sinclair's spacious hall,
There is a princely banquet and a ball;
And brilliant is the rout, with "pearl and
plume,"

The noblest blood of Caithness grace the room;
And youth and beauty by the lamp's bright glare,
To music's strains are lightly bounding there,
And form a scene as happy as 'tis bright,
On which the eye reposes with delight.
Among the gayest Sinclair treads the dance,
Joy lighting up his manly countenance;
To-morrow's sun will see him and his band,
Perhaps for ever quit their native land;
Yet if the thought hath in his mind a place,
It clouds not now the sunshine of his face.
And she, the lady of his heart is nigh,
All grace and beauty charming every eye;
But late she seemed to deepest grief a prey,
Now she appears the gayest of the gay,
And threads from time to time the mazy dance,
With youth's light step and pleasure's sparkling
glance;
Sure some bright thought has chased the cloud
away,
That late so heavy on her spirit lay.

And why should she indulge in selfish grief?
Her lover's absence doubtless will be brief;
'Tis honour calls him to the battle plain,
But he shall soon return to her again,
With glory's "laurelled wreath" upon his brow,
And at the altar consummate his vow.
Suresuch her thought—why then should Lucy fear,
Or dim her eye's sweet lustre with a tear?
Meantime the sparkling wine-cup circles free,
And swells the music in its liveliest key,
And sweeps the dance through the resounding hall,
Until the very portraits on the wall,
The imaged forms of chiefs of other days,
Now dead alike to censure or to praise,
To fancy seemed, as in their frames they shook,
To view the scene with sympathetic look.

'Tis morn—a bark is riding in the bay,
With Sweden's royal banner broad and gay,
Proudly unfurled, and flaunting in the breeze,
As she were queen and mistress of the seas;
She comes to fetch the Caithness troops away,
And seaward must proceed without delay.

Already echoing o'er the rugged strand,
The pipe and drum have roused yon gallant band,
That hasten to the beach in proud array,
Their armour flashing in the solar ray.
And with them come a fond and friendly crowd,
Whose grief at parting with the corps is loud.
It is a scene to touch the roughest heart,
And cause the tear from pity's eye to start;
For some, 'tis certain, of that youthful band
Will never more behold their native land,

But sink, alas ! in war's wild bloody game,
No friends to pay their last sad rites to them.

Hark to the summons of the signal gun !
The hour is up—bright beams the noonday sun.
The breeze is fair, and fair too is the tide—
But where is Sinclair's young and lovely bride ?
Why comes she not among that sister train,
To bid him farewell ere he cross the main ?
None knows—last eve, when all was passing gay,
She from the brilliant ball-room stole away,
And tho' each spot has been explored around,
No trace of her has anywhere been found.
Her friends are plunged in grief, and all regret
The lovely Lucy's dark mysterious fate—
And Sinclair's manly spirit is distressed,
Though he must hide his sorrow in his breast ;
No damping look of sadness he must wear,
Now at the outset of his proud career,
But shew himself, when warlike banners wave,
A leader worthy to command the brave.

Among that sprightly band of volunteers,
There is a youth that by his look appears
Of high descent, and of a form and face
That might the loveliest female figure grace ;
Scarce eighteen summers old he seems as yet,
But on his brow is manly courage writ ;
And his blue eye, that beams with placid rays,
A brighter flash of light at times displays,
As if inspired with some exalted thought,
Or happy dream from youthful fancy caught,
And when he speaks, his voice so sweet and clear,
Falls like a tone of music on the ear ;

But converse he appears to shun—in sooth,
Some mystery seems to hang around the youth,
'Twas but of late he joined that warlike corps,
Maxwell his name—of him they know no more.

With crowded canvas swelling to the gale,
The royal transport hath at length set sail ;
And fleetly wafted by the sunny breeze,
Lo ! with what air of gracefulness and ease,
And queen-like majesty, she walks the tide,
And from her beauteous forehead flings aside
The foamy surge, that far behind her flows,
And like a stream of brightest sunshine glows.

'Twas night, the vessel glided on her way,
And all except the watch in slumber lay,
When Sinclair dreamed he saw before him rise
From out the deep a form in female guise,
And scan the vessel round from stem to stern,
As if its purpose there she sought to learn.
Upon the briny wave that swelled around,
She stood erect as upon stable ground,
And held on high above the ocean flood,
A shroud that seemed all covered o'er with blood.
Around her shoulders, loose and unconfined,
Her sea-green locks were streaming on the wind,
And red and swollen with indignant ire,
Her keen eye glittered like a coal of fire.
She cast on Sinclair a menacing look,
Which he, at first, had scarcely nerve to brook,
Then in a hollow voice the spectre grim,
With glaring eyeballs thus accosted him :
“ Back, while thou can'st unto thy native land,
Thou reckless soldier with thy hireling band,

For, if thou dare set foot on Norway's shore,
Thou and thy minions shall return no more.
The sword is whetting that shall drink thy blood ;
A curse hangs o'er thee both on field and flood ;
Norway, whose soil for cowards has no room,
Her sons hath summoned and pronounced thy
doom.

The wolf and vulture on her hills that breed,
Shall on thy slaughtered followers richly feed ;
Their bones unburied, where they fall, shall lie,
And bleach and wither 'neath the polar sky ;
Then, if thou wouldst escape this fearful fate,
Back with thy minions ere it be too late."

Thus having said, away she seemed to glide,
Then slowly sank into her native tide.
Sinclair awoke (as this wild vision closed)
With throbbing pulse and spirit discomposed,
The warning sounds that lately struck his ear ;
In trembling fancy still he seemed to hear,
And still that fearful shroud of bloody dye,
Was pictured vividly before his eye.
But though, at first, he yielded to dismay,
His wonted courage soon resumed its sway ;
To alter now his course and homeward steer,
He felt would argue an unmanly fear,
And his proud spirit could not brook the thought
Of aught like cowardice, whate'er his lot ;
Better to die upon the field of fame
A thousand fold than live a life of shame.
Tired of his berth, in which he tossing lay,
For sleep, though woo'd, had fled from him away,
Sinclair forsook his weary couch, and now
Repaired on deck to cool his feverish brow,

With the sweet breeze that gently swelled the sail,
And was to him a luxury to inhale.
The night so soft and exquisitely fair,
Might well have charmed the bosom of despair.
The glorious summer moon was shining bright,
With scarce a passing cloud to dim her light,
That on the silvery billow quivering lay
In rival splendour of the orb of day.

What draws the Sinclair's eager notice now?
Seated alone beside the vessel's prow,
A slender youth in seeming pensive mood
Gazes on ocean's boundless solitude,
With moistened eye, as if his thoughts did roam
Back to his kindred and his native home;
Yet frequent throws from off that bright expanse
Towards his chief a kind peculiar glance.
'Tis that young soldier, who the night before
The vessel sailed, joined Sinclair's warlike corps,
Maxwell the name he bears, but all beside
With dogged firmness he thinks fit to hide.

The stripling's look, so delicate and shy,
Hath powerfully arrested Sinclair's eye,
And, as he scanned the pleasing features o'er,
He somehow thought he'd seen that face before,
Which ('twas no doubt a fancy of the brain)
Brought to his memory vividly again,
That of his beautiful and missing bride,
As she appeared in all her virgin pride.
"Soldier," exclaimed the chief, "unless mine eye
Deceive me much beneath this midnight sky,
Thy look and manner both combined denote
Thou wert not bred up in a peasant's cot,

Or born to mingle with the rude and low,
In vulgar life—is this not really so?"

"Excuse me, Chief, if I must silent be
On this unwelcome subject even with thee.
Some future time, if heaven preserve my life,
Amid the dangers with which war is rife,
I may the secret of my birth reveal,
Which now I deem it better to conceal.
This much, at present, may suffice to say,
That from my parents' roof I stole away,
Fired by a youthful zeal to join thy band,
For much I've longed to wield the battle brand,
And win the soldier's honest meed of fame,
On fields that ring with victory's loud acclaim."

"Brave youth! thy martial spirit I esteem,
But, yet, methinks thou dost unhappy seem,
If I may judge from that pale look of thine,
Where grief is legible in every line.
Pray thee, what secret care disturbs thy breast,
To make thee thus forego thy nightly rest,
And here on deck thy lonely vigil keep,
When all thy brother soldiers are asleep?
Dost thou recall to mind with fond regret
The friends thou left'st at home disconsolate,
Or touched with youthful love's impassioned flame,
Brood o'er some gentle heart thou must not name?"
"On this a deep and sudden blush o'erspread
The soldier's cheek, while with a sigh he said:
"'Tis so, my chief, I feel at times o'ercome
With grief when thinking of my friends at home,
And true it is, with this regret is joined
Another feeling of a tenderer kind;

Still there is something else, I must avow,
Preys more than all upon my spirit now—
I would not augur ill, yet much I fear
This expedition, Chief, will cost us dear."

"What makes thee think so? youngster, dost
suppose

My corps will tamely sink before their foes,
Or yield that flag on which is blazoned bright
The Scottish lion rampant for the fight?"

"No, my good Chief, I do not doubt our men
Will quit themselves right valiantly—but then
If fate hath said, *They go to find a tomb*,
Their utmost valour cannot change their doom.
Before my dreaming eye there rose to-night
A fearful vision of a coming fight,
Which even in memory painfully doth thrill
My sickened heart, and makes me shudder still.
Methought a savage host embrued with gore,
Rushed instantaneously upon our corps,
And cut them down in one appalling mass,
As mowers with their scythe cut down the grass,
Until the spot was covered with our slain,
And blood appeared to deluge all the plain.
And on my ear came shrieks and sounds of woe,
Mingled with hideous laughter from the foe,
That with insulting scorn and brandished blade
Trampled upon, and danced above the dead!"

"Thy dream was strangely wild I must admit,
But why should'st thou feel so disturbed by it?
For what are all such dreams at best but vain
And shadowy illusions of the brain,

Which fancy conjures up, when reason throws
Her curb aside, and sinks into repose.
Let not thy young heart then desponding brood
On fears like these, so groundless and so crude,
For with God's help, in equal fight my band
Shall ne'er be beat, and shame their native land."

Thus having spoke, he bade the youth adieu,
And to his cabin pensively withdrew ;
There as he lay and tossed upon his bed,
Absorbed in thought, unto himself he said :
"'Tis strange, I know not whence the feeling
springs,

But to this youth my yearning bosom clings
With spell-like power, which I cannot explain,
As we were linked by some mysterious chain.
More strange 'tis still, that he as well as I
Should both have visions of some danger nigh.
I put no faith in fancies of the kind,
And yet, I own, they much disturb my mind.
Would I were sure that they were kindly sent
By heaven to warn me of some dire event,
Or fatal accident in battle's shape
Which yet by timely care I may escape ;
Would I could think so, but 'tis vain to guess,
Or speculate on such a point as this.
Happen what may, I now must forward go,
And with unshrinking courage face the foe."

Thus with himself he communed till his ear
Caught the glad bagpipe's morning summons near,
And at the inspiring sound despondence fled
With all her train of doubts, and in her stead
Came thoughts of glory on the battle plain,
Brightening his soul as sunrise did the main.

1. The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that the study of the history of the United States is essential for a full understanding of the country and its people. The paper then discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States in the context of the world. It is argued that the study of the history of the United States is essential for a full understanding of the world and its people.

2. The second part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States in the context of the world. It is argued that the study of the history of the United States is essential for a full understanding of the world and its people.

3. The third part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States in the context of the world. It is argued that the study of the history of the United States is essential for a full understanding of the world and its people.

CANTO SECOND.

THREE days have passed, by favouring breezes
marked,
Since Sinclair with his gallant corps embarked,
And now the coast of Norway swells in sight,
Flushed with the evening's rich and gorgeous light.
Freshens the breeze, and stooping on her side,
The stately vessel rushes through the tide ;
And every moment brings him nearer to
The land where he shall deeds of valour do,—
Such deeds as, sounded by the trump of fame,
Will spread abroad and glorify his name.
So Hope, the flatterer, whispers in his ear,
And points in prospect to a proud career.

With long chain-cable stretching from her bow,
The vessel snugly rides at anchor now ;
And sick of sea, impatient for the land,
The Scottish troops are boated to the strand ;
To them how passing sweet to tread once more
Earth's hallowed soil though on a hostile shore.
Within the covert of a quiet glade ;
Dotted with straggling fir their camp is made ;
And to secure the troops against surprise,
When sleep with opiate wand hath sealed their eyes,

At proper intervals along the ground,
Night sentinels are posted all around.
Stretched by the kindling watch-fire some repose,
And, in their dreams, already fight their foes,
Or meet their happy friends at home once more,
The toils and dangers of their warfare o'er ;
While some in lively converse spend the hour,
Relate wild tales of fierce and lawless power,
Or sing some native bard's impassioned lays
That breathe of home, and rustic beauty's praise.

In one of those small groups that whiled away
The hour with legends of the olden day,
Sat Maxwell listening with attentive ear,
His blue eye moistened with the frequent tear,
As some affecting passage, void of art,
With gentle pity seemed to touch his heart ;
At length he yields unto his mate's request,
To contribute his story 'mong the rest,
And while the dying watch-fire glimmered pale,
He told this wild and melancholy tale.

STORY OF THE BLACK CHIEF.

Three changeful centuries have passed away,
Since Reginald of Keiss (so legends say)
Lived in his old hereditary tower,
A bloated chieftain of despotic power,
Whose sole delight in feud and rapine lay,
And darker deeds that shun the light of day.
His abject vassals, while they feared his rod,
With cringing haste obeyed his slightest nod.
Cruel and proud, his dark licentious soul
Spurned at religion, and disdained controul ;

Yet, though he laughed at all religious creeds,
He duly kissed the rood, and told his beads,
And kept besides a reverend priest in pay,
To pardon and confess him every day.
And Father Gairy, complaisant and shrewd,
High in the Black Chief's estimation stood,
And, by insinuation's pleasing art,
Had got himself entwined around his heart.
In early youth at famed Bologna bred,
In occult science he was deeply read;
Knew all the mysteries of priestcraft well,
And was a master at the book and bell.

Lord Oliphant, who was a sportsman keen,
With hound and horn had all day hunting been,
And now returned at twilight's shadowy hour,
Held high carousal in his ancient tower.
Around his board were met a jolly crew
Of boon companions whom for years he knew,
Bold, roystering fellows, sprung of Danish race,
And, like himself, enthusiasts in the chase.

With radiant eye, and sweetly blooming cheek,
His lovely daughter Rose, the flower of Wick,
For beauty's winning charms admired by all,
Was seen from time to time to grace the hall,
And with her maiden presence soft and mild,
Calm down the revel, when it grew too wild.

A horn hath sounded in the court below,
Enters a serving man with formal bow.
"A reverend priest, outside, doth humbly seek
Permission with my gracious Lord to speak."
"With me," cried Oliphant, "why, what can he

Have, at such hour as this, to say to me ?
No ghostly aid, at present, I require,
Thank heaven, I ween, from either monk or friar.
It must be something of importance deep,
That brings *him* here when people go to sleep.
Haste, fetch the fellow in without delay,
I marvel much what he hath got to say."

With sable hood, that half concealed his face,
And studied look of sanctity and grace,
Entered the monk, and bending slight his frame,
Invoked a blessing in the Virgin's name,
On Oliphant and all that shared his feast,
Then paused with both hands folded on his breast.

" Whence com'st thou friar ? pray thee take a
seat,

Methinks, my reverend guest doth travel late."

" From Keiss, my Lord, I've come," the monk
replied,

" I like sometimes to walk at eventide—

Thou'lt pardon me, I hope, at this late hour,
For thus intruding in thy noble tower ;
But business of the Black Chief's brings me here ;
I've got a private message for your ear,
Which, when you've answered, I must haste away,
You know Sir Reginald brooks no delay."

" Well, since you must thus hasten back to Keiss,
Speak out your message—is it war or peace ?
There are no secrets 'twixt your chief and me,
And those around are all my friends you see."

" Sir Reginald instructs me, then, to say,"
Replied the monk with visage long and grey,

He much admires your charming daughter Rose,
That peerless flower, as every body knows ;
So hopes you'll grant the lady for his bride,
But begs to say, that if his suit's denied,
He'll take her from thee speedily by force,
This hath he sworn, and will perform of course."

"Ha! said he so? my daughter carry hence
Against my will by dint of violence!
No! while this arm of mine can wield a brand,
While Auldwick's iron walls are seen to stand.
Tell your Black Chief from me when you return,
His sought alliance with contempt I spurn;
Nay, sooner than behold my child his bride
I'd see her buried in yon whelming tide.
As for thyself, 'tis well thou art a priest,
Whose sacred calling claims respect at least,
Else, for the insulting message thou dost bring,
By all the saints I'd treat thee to a swing
From yonder casement, for a full half hour—
Begone! and tell your Chief I scorn his power."

On this the monk, who saw a tempest brew,
Just crossed himself and silently withdrew.
The guests applaud the spirit of their host,
And ridicule the Black Chief's empty boast.
"If I mistake not, friends," cried Oliphant,
"Yon priest is full as great a rogue as saint.
Marked ye the expression of the caitiff's eye,
So sinister, ambiguous, and sly;
I much suspect those fellows, I confess,
Who cannot look you boldly in the face;
At bottom I have found them still to be
Villains of deep and crooked policy."

The monk retired, yet ere he left the place,
He lingered in the court a little space,
To have a private word with Angus Bayne,
An old retainer of his Lordship's train.
Bayne seemed at first, from what he said, to
shrink,

As from a fearful precipice's brink,
And shook his head, and gazed around with fear,
Lest some officious dog should overhear ;
But still the wily monk his purpose pressed
With all the ready tact which he possessed ;
And now with look insinuating bland,
He slippeth something into Angus' hand,
Which in a trice hath laid his fears to rest,
And silenced every scruple in his breast.

Sir Reginald, who with impatience burned,
Flew to the monk, as soon as he returned.
" How sped the business Friar ? Didst thou see
The Oliphant ? What answer is for me ?
What of his lovely daughter ? speak, be brief,
I long to know what said the lordly chief."
" The haughty Oliphant, I grieve to say,"
Replied the monk—" by Satan led astray,
Rejects contemptuously thy proffered suit,
And spurns thee like a reptile from his foot.
' Tell your Black Chief'—says he ' I scorn his
power,
My daughter Rose shall never grace his tower ?
I'd sooner see her buried 'neath the wave,
Than she should be that tyrant's wedded slave—
And, having uttered this, in one wild breath
He ordered me begone, on pain of death ! "

"Hell fire, and fury! said he so? then I
Shall be revenged on him tho' I should die."

"Tush!" said the monk, "with impious oaths
like these

Offend not heaven, but keep thy mind at ease;
Thou'lt have a sweet revenge, Sir, take my word—
On yon conceited coxcomb of a Lord."

"Then, ere you left the haughty varlet's tower,
You tried my talisman of sovereign power."

"I did," replied the monk, "and with success,
Auldwick is thine, from this day forth, I guess,
Attack it—and when thou beholdest clear"—
The rest he whispered in the Black Chief's ear,
Who by St. Fergus swore the thought was bright,
And slapped the Friar's shoulders with delight.

Sir Reginald, inflamed with deadly hate,
Hath summoned all his vassals small and great,
To muster speedily, by break of day,
At Castle Keiss equipped in full array,
With warlike implements of every sort,
To storm Lord Oliphant's redoubted fort.
Thither they come, a rude and motley crew,
Whate'er their chief commands obliged to do;
And Father Gairey hath the whole confessed,
And purged their sins with corresponding haste.

Three days Sir Reginald hath striven in vain
To take Auldwick with his besieging train;
For Oliphant defended it with skill,
And drove the assailants back with slaughter still,
Till now the proud knight raged at the delay,
And loss of followers each succeeding day.

But chief, with fierce resentment he inveighed
Against the ghostly father who, he said,
Had quite deceived him and misused his gold,
For which he'd have him hanged outside his hold,
In spite of priest and pope, unless he took
The castle in two days by hook or crook.

The fourth day passed inactively away—
Wrapt in their plaids the foiled besiegers lay ;
For now a furious storm of wind and rain
Battered the fields, and lashed the indignant
main

That boiled along the rocks with thundering sound,
And flung the foamy spray in sheets around.
All day the knight was in a spleeny mood,
He cursed the elements and spurned his food,
And, like a maniac of his judgment reft,
Struck all that ventured near him right and left.
At eve, as doth a fretful child at breast,
The storm had nearly roared itself to rest ;
But still, at times, in fitful gusts it blew,
While one black cloud concealed the heavens from
view.

At length, amid the darkness of the night,
Shone from the battlements a sudden light,
Which, by the Black Chief was no sooner seen
Than up to foot he sprang with joyful mien,
And loudly shouted to himself—" By heaven !
It shines at last—the appointed signal's given ;
Friar, thy neck is safe—now, for the attack—
This time at least, I shan't be driven back."

He orders now his followers to advance
Against the castle fearlessly at once ;

They reach the bridge—as 'twere by magic wand
It drops down silently, and that wild band
Are safe across, protected by the hour
And friendly aid from the beleagured tower.
Who is yon traitor that receives them there,
With conscious guilt depicted in his air ?
'Tis Angus Bayne, who hath for sake of gold
Betrayed his master and the fortress sold.
Deeming himself secure from night attack,
Nor dreaming once of treachery so black,
Lord Oliphant amused the passing hour
At chess with a domestic of the tower ;
While Bayne, as special warder for the night,
Came frequent in to say that all was right.

Is that the billow that with heavy sound
Bursts on the rude and iron rocks around ?
Louder it grows, and trampling footsteps near,
The listner now may quite distinctly hear.
Struck with the strange and still increasing
noise,
Lord Oliphant unto the casement flies ;
Why do his features blanch ? a sudden gleam
Of broken moonlight o'er the ground doth stream,
And to his startled eye reveals the foe,
Headed by Bayne, in powerful force below.
" O righteous God !" he cried, " that knave hath
played
The traitor's part, and we are all betrayed—
Rouse up the garrison—my sword—my sword !
Destruction seize that perjured wretch abhorred !"

He said, and dashed into the court below,
Where strove his brave adherents with the foe.

Aided by torchlight, gallantly awhile
They fight, and victory seems on them to smile,
Led on by Oliphant, whose powerful brand
Wreaks deadly vengeance on the Black Chief's band;
And now, among that fierce and savage train,
His eye hath caught a sudden glance of Bayne,
And rushing towards him in frantic haste,
He thrusts his sword into that traitor's breast,
"There, take thy merited reward," he cried,
Thou son of Judas, and to hell allied."

Borne down by numbers and superior strength,
His small but gallant band hath sunk at length,
And now, although he sees that all is lost,
Almost alone he combats with a host,
And, nerved with all the spirit of despair,
Deals fearful slaughter round him everywhere
Among the foe, who, for a moment stand,
Awed by the terror of his single brand.
"Cowards! for shame!" roars out Sir Reginald,
"From Oliphant alone d'ye shrink appalled?
Trip up his heels—surround him—hem him close—
Or by the rood he'll drive you in the fosse."
They press around—his blood with fury boils,
And as a lion from the hunter's toils
He bursts impetuous through their close array,
And, for a brief space, holds the whole at bay.
But vain his efforts, pierced with many a wound,
He drops at last exhausted on the ground;
Thick heaves his breath—life's sands are ebbing fast,
The gallant Oliphant hath sighed his last!

On this a yell of triumph rends the skies—
"Auldwick is ours," the Black Chief proudly cries;

"Now for my bride." The castle's searched
around.

From side to side, but Rose cannot be found,
Who in a secret chamber trembling lay,
Amid the horrors of that fatal fray.

Thus disappointed, baffled of the prize
Which he had deemed secure before his eyes,
The Black Chief's rage at once excessive grew,
He gnashed his teeth, and violently flew
From place to place—then like a fiend inspired,
He fiercely roared out—"Let the fort be fired!"

The word is caught—as by a lightning stroke,
The castle blazes through a cloud of smoke;
Fanned by the breeze the fiery current spreads,
Startling with horrid glare night's dunest shades,
And soon the whole, except the donjon tower,
Yields to the flame's wild devastating power.

But where is Rose, the ornament and pride
Of Auldwick Castle while it crowned the tide?
Alas! she too hath sunk a hapless prey
To those wild flames, secreted where she lay,
And thus, in beauty's vernal bloom and grace,
Perished the last and loveliest of her race.

Here closed the youth his tale of olden time,
So full of dark barbarity and crime;
And with his comrades stretched along the ground,
Soon after sank into repose profound.

Meantime 'tis rumoured that the Scottish band
Had disembarked on Romsdahl's quiet strand;

Through every hamlet hath the tidings spread,
And mingled rage and consternation bred.
In all directions couriers post away,
To bid the peasants arm without delay,
And signal fires are now seen blazing bright
On every neighbouring cliff and mountain height.
Roused at the summons armed with brand and
spear,

From every point they hasten far and near,
And mustering strong upon the midnight wold,
A grave and hasty consultation hold,
Whether or not they should attack the foe,
And strive to check him ere he farther go.
A few, foreboding peril and disgrace,
Regard with deep despondency their case ;
Of these as spokesman, Henrick Aukerstroude—
A sturdy peasant—thus addressed the crowd :
“ 'Tis true, my friends, we're in a painful plight,
But, without leader and unskilled to fight,
'Tis worse than madness, so it seems to me,
However brave our peasantry may be,
For us to think of combating a foe,
So large in number, and of warlike show.
Our troops at distance can no succour yield,
If we attempt to fight our doom is sealed ;
Why then rush heedless to the battle plain,
Where death is certain and resistance vain.”

“ Shame to the coward that would idly stand
And see the foe invade his fatherland,”
Cried Berdon Sigelstadt of Ringeboe,
A brave old man whose locks were like the snow,
“ Shame to the coward that in danger's day,
Would from his post of duty slink away !

And, to all patriotic feeling dead,
Hide in some nook obscure his recreant head ;
The wretch that could so dastardly behave,
Deserves indeed to live and die a slave.
What, though the royal troops at distance be,
Are we to stand with folded hands and see
Our hamlets plundered by those vile brigands—
Our wives and daughters fall into their hands ?
Are we, I say, to see all this, nor make
One effort for our own or country's sake ?
Forbid it manhood ! all that we hold dear
Calls on us now to shake off craven fear,
And punish, if we can, this daring host,
Whose impious feet pollute our sacred coast.
Say not you want a leader for the fight,
Myself will head your onset with delight ;
Nay, cheerfully resign for Norway's sake,
This wasted frame—'tis all that death can take.
But tis no time for parley or delay,
Each moment's precious, and we must away ;
Gird on your swords then for the coming field,
And meet the foe determined not to yield.
The warlike spirits of your sires of old
Are hovering round you, eager to behold
Your efforts in the good and sacred cause
Of Norway's ancient liberties and laws ;
Be but like them, I say, as brave and true,
And we shall make these bloody Scots to rue
The day they first set foot on Norway's strand,—
One cheer for victory and our fatherland."



CANTO THIRD.

THE pipe's shrill note hath roused the Scottish
band,—

Bright beams the morn, their first on foreign land ;
The lark pours forth his matin song with glee ;
The black bird loudly whistles from the tree ;
Glitter the dew drops on each blushing flower
That opes its bosom to the radiant hour ;
And distant mountain-top, and silvan stream
With joy seem smiling in the ruddy beam.

'Mong Sinclair's young, intrepid volunteers,
The scene, all life and spirit now appears ;
Burning for battle, with impatient air,
They strike their tents, and for the march prepare ;
And soon in full and orderly array,
With steady pace, the column moves away,
To join Munkhaven, whose warlike forces gain
Each day fresh laurels from the baffled Dane.
'Mong pine-clad mountains full of steep defiles,
There is a valley stretching up for miles ;
Through this the Scottish chief pursues his route,
Despoiling all the hamlets round about ;
Nor till the third day gilds the heaven's blue arch
Meets he with aught to check his onward march.

Now full in front a mountain gorge appears,
Which to the eye a savage aspect wears ;
Narrow and steep on either side arise
Dark threatening cliffs of a gigantic size,
Whereon the eagle undisturbed might dwell
And rear his young and hardy offspring well.
At bottom ran a deep and rapid stream,
Scarce ever brightened by the summer beam ;
A narrow foot-path on one side alone,
With tangling shrubs, at intervals o'ergrown,
Was all the passage that the traveller found,
Without a circuit of some miles around..
Few ever trod that hidden path of fear,
Except the young adventurous mountaineer,
Or the wild goat that browsed, on summer days,
In spots on which 'twas dreadful even to gaze.

While now their leader hesitating stood,
Before the pass so perilous and rude,
A youth in peasant garb, with gun in hand,
Approached with cautious step the Scottish band,
And making to their chief obeisance low,
Wished him God speed against the common foe.
At first, mistrustful of his bearing smooth,
Sinclair with searching glance addressed the youth :
" Young man, if thou comest hither as a spy,
As I suspect, into my ranks to pry,
Thou'lt expiate thy treachery on the spot,
By heaven ! I'll cause thee instantly be shot ;
Then, in a word, declare to me the truth."
" No traitor foe am I," replied the youth,
" Or native of the land, by birth a Swede,
I come to offer thee my friendly aid ;
A shepherd near this spot, not long ago,

Each nook and crevice of the pass I know,
And well I may, for oft from early dawn,
Until the sun's bright visage was withdrawn,
I've clambered 'mid these rocks, so stern and grey,
Guarding my master's charge from beasts of prey ;
Therefore, if you will trust yourself to me,
I'll guide you through without reward or fee."
"What of the peasantry ? is't true that they,
As rumour speaks, are banded in array,
And purpose to attack my troops ? if so
You'll doubtless somewhat of their movements
know."

"The rumour thou hast heard," rejoined the youth,

"Believe me, Chief, is quite devoid of truth.
From farther Gulbrands I have come to-day,
And thou cans't safely credit what I say.
The news of thy approach, now widely spread,
Hath paralysed the peasantry with dread,
So that they scarce know what to think or say,
But stand with lifted hands in pale dismay.
They offer thee resistance ! 'tis a joke—
A set of cravens of a coward stock.
'Tis true old Sigelstadt of Ringeboe,
A babbler, in his dotage years ago,
Has urged them strongly to attack your band,
But they've no wish to feel the Scottish brand.
No, no, thou need'st not be afraid that they
Will rashly throw their precious lives away.
As to the pass, thou safely mayest depend
On my experience"—

"Lead the way then friend,"

The Sinclair said, and in a cheering tone
He bade his trusty Highlanders move on.

At length the troops with hesitating tread,
The steep and toilsome pass begin to thread,
Whose beetling brow and darkly yawning throat,
Fill even the bravest with uneasy thought.
Meantime the peasant who conducts the corps,
With loaded gun walks briskly on before.
Methinks a smile is glistening in his eye,
As to the cliffs above him, stern and high,
He casts from time to time a stealthy look,
And once his frame with strong emotion shook.
What does that nervous agitation mean,
And glance ambiguous he would not have seen ?
Each rugged step familiarly he knows,
Nor can he surely dread surprise from foes.
The middle of the pass is now attained,
Lead on—the farther point will soon be gained,
And then the troops will have an open space,
Where they can march again with quickened pace.
But where's the guide ? behind a jutting brow,
He suddenly hath darted off, and now,
The dread suspicion which he must not speak,
Rushes o'er Sinclair's mind, and pales his cheek,
That the youth's tale was but a specious lie,
And he himself beyond all doubt a spy,
Sent by the natives to mislead his band,
While they themselves were likely close at hand.
Shall he proceed, or back his steps retrace ?
The peril seemed the same in either case ;
So, at all hazards, he would now advance,
And strive to clear the rugged pass at once.
What startling sound is that arrests the ear,
As from a gun or huntsman's rifle near ?
More loud and frequent the reports become—
Amazement strikes the advancing column dumb.

Blood hath already dyed the narrow ground,
And Sinclair's men are falling thickly round.
Oh heaven! suspecting not the dire onslaught,
The Scottish troops in ambuscade are caught;
Hemmed in, and close attacked in front and rear,
And from the cliffs, on each side frowning near,
Where'er the cruel foe can kneel or stand,
One murderous fire is poured on Sinclair's band.
And Kringin's mountain stream is red with blood,
Which ne'er till now had stained its lonely flood.
Now they have gained at last the open plain,
Though of their numbers few, alas! remain,
And with their gallant leader sword in hand,
With desperate fury charge the peasant band,
That half recoil before the onset driven,
Their still increasing ranks asunder riven.
Again they rally and again fall back,
Before the hardy Highlanders' attack,
While Sinclair cheers them on, and waves his sword,
To charge once more for life the savage horde.
Why do they falter now in mid career,
As if their hearts were struck with sudden fear?
Alas for them! their leader wounded falls,
And more than thousand foes that sight appalls
The gallant few who deem it all in vain,
The unequal combat longer to maintain,
Outnumbered as they are, and sadder still,
Without e'en one their leader's place to fill.
And that fair youth who 'midst the thickest fray,
Showed not the smallest symptom of dismay,
Now deadly pale and overwhelmed with grief,
Weeps like a child beside the dying chief.
One burst of tender feeling hath revealed
The truth, which can no longer be concealed—

'Tis Lucy's self, in male disguise, 'tis she
That o'er him bends in deepest agony !
" O Lucy !" sighed the Chief, " why did'st not
thou,

My dearly loved, reveal thyself till *now*—
Till this sad hour, when I must yield to fate,
And leave thee here forlorn and desolate,
With none to shield thee from our common foe ;
O God ! this forms my bitterest cup of woe.
If thou wert safe I could have died in peace,
And in the grave from sorrow found release,
But fear for thee doth wring my sinking heart,
And gives to death's last pang a keener smart.
There is a thick cloud settling on mine eye,
Let me have one embrace before I die ;
Now fare thee well !" words failed to utter more,—
One long drawn sigh he heaved, and all was o'er.

A peasant leader hath approached the spot,
Where Lucy broods in misery o'er her lot ;
For he hath heard the rumour now which flies,
That she was Sinclair's lady in disguise.
Stained is his sword with blood, and he appears
At first to smile in triumph at her tears.
Alas ! and must that noble-hearted maid
Quail 'neath his haughty glance and murderous
blade ?

No ! starting quickly from her sorrow's trance,
She shews the spirit of her sex at once ;
And while a glow of indignation high
Reddens her cheek and sparkles in her eye,
She thus interrogates the stranger rude,
How now he dares upon her grief intrude.

"What is thy purpose fellow? comest thou here
To feast thy vengeance o'er my soldier's bier,
And triumph in a wretched female's fate,
Now reft of all, and rendered desolate?"

"Not such my purpose, lady, but to shield
Thy person from all harm I've left the field,
No longer doubtful—praise to God on high,
Who to our arms vouchsafes the victory.
Old Bingeboe, who led our band to-day
So nobly to the fight, I'm proud to say,
He is my sire—no dotard you'll allow,
Though fourscore years have furrowed o'er his
brow,
Myself, I daresay, thou hast seen before,
When as a guide I first approached your corps."

"Then, thou art that false youth, who didst betray
Our troops to where yon fatal ambush lay."

"I am, nay more, rejoice in what I did,
For, where's the patriot would not strive to rid
His country of a hired and foreign host,
Come like a plague to desolate the coast?
But, lady, thy brave spirit I admire,
And beauty worthy of a poet's lyre;
And, if thou'lt now accept my proffered hand,
We'll spare the scanty remnant of thy band—
If not, they'll share their late companions' fate,
And thou mayest guess what doth thyself await."

"Detested villain! comest thou here to add
Insult to treachery—to drive me mad?
And, darrest thou a proposal make, which I
Than yield assent to, sooner far would die.
I spurn thy mercy on such terms as must

Inspire a virtuous bosom with disgust,
All steeped in guile and falsehood as thou art,
A dastard hypocrite without a heart.
The blood of those brave men thou hast betrayed
Calls loud for vengeance on thy guilty head ;
And though a female hand doth strike the blow,
Thy treachery shall not unpunished go ;
And brief shall be thy triumph in their fall,
Thou wretch, whose breast no pity owns at all !”
She ceased to speak, and ere he could reply,
Dead on the spot she shot the traitor spy !

Seized on by ruffian foes, and captive led,
A direful fate awaits the Scottish maid ;
For, the few soldiers that survive their Chief,
To her, alas ! can render no relief,
O ! that the Swedish force were now at hand
To rescue Lucy from that savage band,
Or that some pitying angel from on high,
Would shield her in this sad extremity.

The trumpet's note is swelling on the ear—
And, lo ! a Swedish troop in full career,
Are dashing on—a spirit-stirring sight—
Straight for the scene of the disastrous fight.
Onward they come ; and, at their head is seen
A gallant chief, of proud undaunted mien ;
His sword unsheathed, and glancing in his hand
He waves like one accustomed to command ;
That leader is Munkhaven, of high renown,
Who late hath humbled haughty Denmark's crown.
Meantime, the peasant host, when they behold
The troops advancing resolutely bold,
Armed cap-a-pie, and marshalled for the fight,

Bend for their rugged fastnesses their flight ;
And Lucy, too, is dragged with them away
To wild vindictive rage the destined prey.

The brave Munkhaven hath seen their coward
flight,

The word is given to charge—and quick as light
Forth flash a hundred sabres on the sight ;
And now, each gallant horseman spurs his steed,
And, like a whirlwind with resistless speed,
They dash at once on the retreating horde,
With keen avenging carabine and sword.
Hark! does that loud exulting cheer arise
From the pursuing troop, or foe that flies ?
Again it bursts with an o'erwhelming shout,
From rock and valley, echoed round about ;
That cheer is from the Swedish troop, whose brands
Have rescued Lucy from her victor's hands.

The sounds of battle strife have died away
O'er that sad field to be remembered aye,
And melancholy silence once more broods
Amidst her wild and savage solitudes.
Yet, lovely is the eve—in sweetest guise
She comes apparell'd from her native skies ;
Heedless alike of human joy or woe,
The face of nature doth no sadness shew,
And, as such tragic fray had never been,
The sun sets brightly with unclouded mien,
And tinges with his richest hue the plain
Where lie the unburied corpses of the slain,
There to afford, ere close another day,
A rich repast to birds and beasts of prey.
Already hath the vulture eyed afar

That feast of death and sacrifice of war,
And o'er the battle-field, with outstretched wing,
And whetted beak seems keenly hovering.

Amid the pale and shadowy moonlight
What mournful scene doth now arrest the sight?
A burial-party bear, with solemn tread,
The fallen hero to his final bed.
The Scottish pipe is pouring on the gale
Its wild and woe-inspiring funeral wail,
And bitter tears that eloquently speak
Poor Lucy's grief—are coursing down her cheek,
As, without coffin in the desert glade,
She sees her soldier-lover lowly laid.

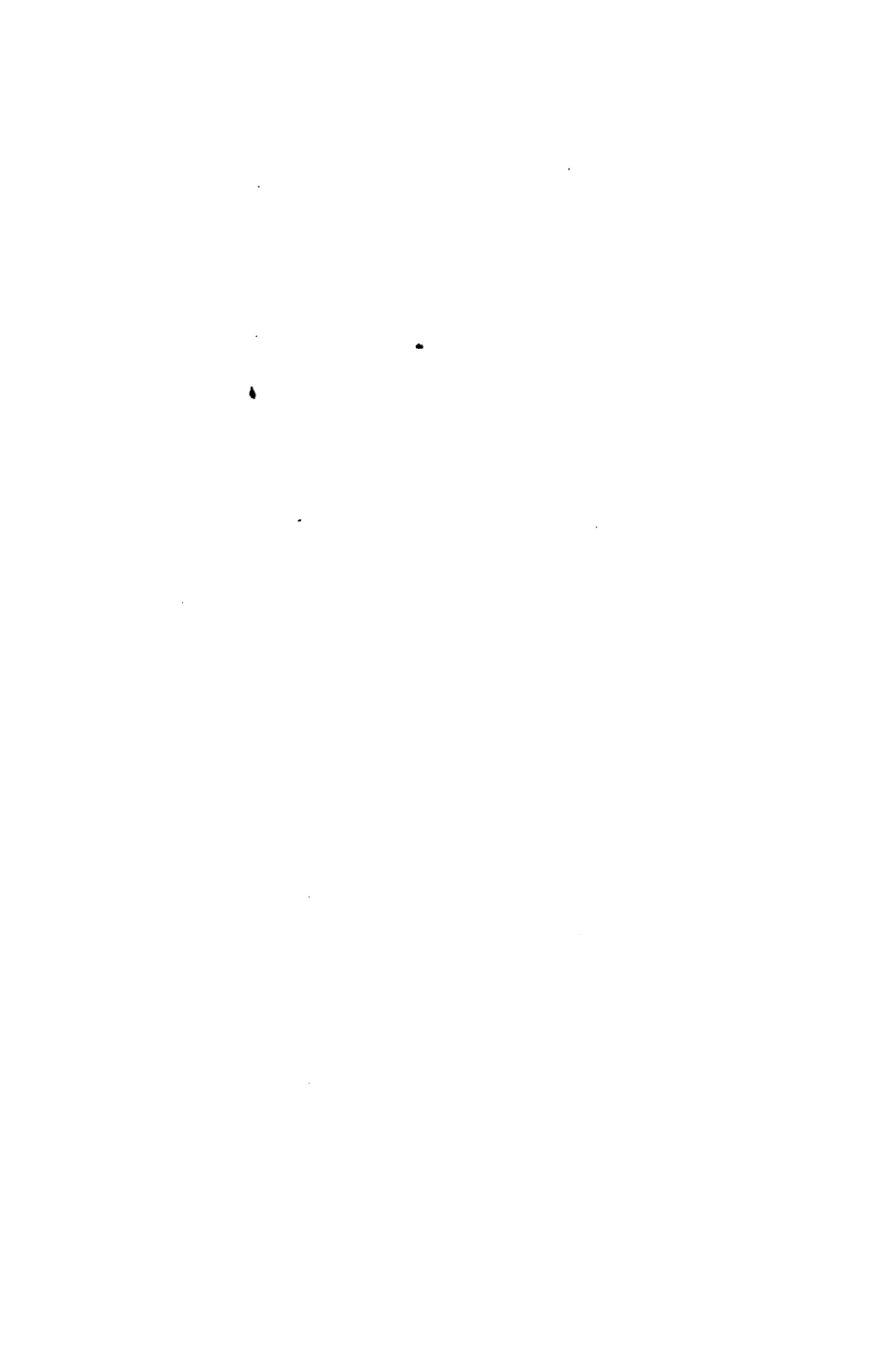
The Swedish chief a sloop of war hath manned
To carry Lucy to her native land,
With the few soldiers that survive—alas!
To tell the tale of Kringin's bloody pass.
She gains the deck, and now with heavy heart,
She almost feels as she were loth to part
From that wild shore, within whose rugged breast
Her hero's dear remains untimely rest.
Meantime the vessel cleaves the billowy tide,
With snow-white canvas swelling o'er her side,
And straight for Wick her destined course pursues,
The gloomy bearer of appalling news.

Escaped the horrors of that dire campaign,
Now Lucy treads her native shore again;
But, ah! what change hath grief and blighting
thought
O'er her fair form and lovely features wrought.
She marks the scene where she so oft had strayed

With him, who slumbers in his narrow bed ;
And, as each well known haunt appears to view,
The fountain of her tears flows forth anew.

The vesper bell hath rung, at close of day—
And, hark ! from yonder convent lone and grey,
Rich liquid sounds of harmony arise,
In grateful accents swelling to the skies.
Whose the sweet voice that mingles with that choir,
So full of thrilling tenderness and fire ?
'Tis that of Lucy, who with visage pale,
Her thoughts on heaven—hath now assumed the
 veil,
Retired for ever from a world so rude,
To dwell among that gentle sisterhood,
And spend the fleeting remnant of her days
In holy meditation and in praise.

END OF THE SOLDIER'S BRIDE.



THE
ENCHANTED ISLAND.



THE
ENCHANTED ISLAND.

On the broad bosom of the salt sea tide,
But, whereabouts, it matters not to say,
Guarded secure with rocks on every side,
A little isle of barren aspect lay ;
Yet did the natives look on it with pride,
When summer clothed it in its best array ;
For tho' no tree nor shrub enriched the view,
The best potatoes, kail, and corn it grew.

Six miles it measured in circumference round,
As near's my muse is able to compute,
Who once or twice rode over all the ground
Upon her Pegasus, a steady brute ;
The shores with "cuddens"* greatly did abound,
With epicures, a fish of small repute,
But which the natives thought exceeding good,
And blessed the sea for giving them such food.

They were a primitive, amphibious race,
That lived as much on water as on land,
With locks unkempt, and weather-beaten face,
And lingo somewhat hard to understand ;

* Coal fish.

Their little skiffs they managed with a grace
And skill that admiration did command,
And through the roughest seas they bravely steered,
And neither Eolus nor Neptune feared.

Of politics, that bane of social life
In other parts, they never heard the name,
Or that still greater curse, religious strife,
Of modern Christians the disgrace and shame,
Which 'gainst the husband often sets the wife,
And keeps the country in a perfect flame ;
From all these evils of the first degree,
The simple natives happily were free.

For bookish lore they were not much renowned,
Nor did they e'er with schemes their brains harass,
So that they slumbered on their beds quite sound,
Unvexed with cares of railways or of gas ;
They thought the sun and not the earth went round,
And that the sapphire sky was made of glass,
While their belief was very strong in ghosts,
And all such " bokies " as frequent sea coasts.

With pious reverence still they close adhered
To all the good old customs of their sires—
At novelties of every kind they sneered—
Ambition was not one of their desires ;
Of turf and stone their cottages they reared—
In middle of the floor they had their fires,
Without a chimney and without a lattice ;
They chiefly lived on " brochan " and potatoes.

Their drink was ever from the crystal rill,
Of that famed aqua yet they nothing knew.

Which men now manufacture from a "still,"
And modern bards have christened "Mountain
dew ;"

Hence they required no healing draught or pill
To set their stomachs right, as toppers do,
But lived quite healthy to their day of death,
And only died at last for want of breath.

Such was their happy and contented state,
So beautiful and pleasant to behold,
Unstained by vice, and free from care and debt,
As in the age ycleped the age of gold,
Which ancient bards so highly celebrate,
And modern ones have after them extolled ;
Such bliss was theirs until, in evil hour,
A tempting spirit drew them in his power.

The great archfiend that prowleth night and day
Through all the regions of the earth unseen,
Just like a roaring lion for his prey,
Beheld their happiness with envious eyne ;
And cogitating how in shortest way
He might destroy their peace and comfort clean,
He straight despatched towards the happy isle
From farthest hell, a wicked wizard vile.

John Barleycorn—such was the wizard's name—
In guise of modern pharisee appeared,
With face that glowed as it were in a flame,
And eye that looked a little red and bleared ;
An ample cloak enveloped aye his frame,
As if the coldness of the clime he feared ;
And so unsteady was his gait and awkward,
The road was oft too narrow for the blackguard.

At times he seemed extravagantly glad,
And talked as if his tongue would never stop,
At other times he looked quite grave and sad,
Like one that in a fit of "blues" doth mope;
Then from a precious bottle which he had
Lodged in his pouch, he'd take a swilling drop,
Which made his tongue once more to go with glee,
Such virtue in that bottle seemed to be.

As when a C——h doth his gifts display,
The vulgar crowd to him from far and near,
And press around to catch what he will say,
With gaping mouth, and greedy eye and ear;
So flocked the natives in their hodden grey,
This subtle minister of vice to hear,
Who with enticing words and ready smile,
Harangued his audience in the following style :—

"Natives of this romantic spot that lies
Amid the deep, so pleasant to the view,
Striking the passing seaman with surprise,
So like an emerald encased in blue,
And which, though placed beneath inclement skies,
Might still be made a happier spot for you,
I have come hither from a distant land,
Your precious souls with knowledge to expand.

In ignorance, alas! ye seem to be
Of that which forms man's highest bliss on earth,
And which hath power, you my rely on me,
To fill your souls with constant joy and mirth;
'Tis this which gleaming in my hand you see
Clear as the crystal fountain at its birth."
And from his bottle here a draught he took,
And smacked his thin lips with a knowing look.

"Yes," he exclaimed, continuing his address,
While his eye sparkled with the liquid strong,
"This is the source of real happiness,
The fount of inspiration and of song
Which greatest bards have all been found to bless,
And laud in strains that shall continue long
'To touch in every breast an answering chord,
And charm from time to time the festive board.

But it would take a volume to declare
How exquisite this liquor is and good—
How, with its other countless virtues rare,
It answers as a substitute for food;
How, too, it drives away all grief and care,
And puts the spirits in a joyous mood,
Oft kindling wit, where it was ne'er before,
Whose flashes set the table in a roar.

With help of it, too, you can bravely face
And at defiance set all wicked sprites,
Such as hobgoblins and the fairy race
That on the green sward dance on summer nights,
And steal away your wives, and in their place
Leave sickly spectres that are perfect frights;
Nay, you may fearless keep, with its assistance,
Old Nick himself at a respectful distance.

I from my soul do pity your sad plight,
Grubbing in earth, or dabbling in the sea,
Like veriest slaves ye toil from morn to night,
And still ye seem in abject poverty,
Without the least enjoyment or delight;
But if you'll now be guided just by me,

I'll teach you how to brew this precious 'drappy,'
Which will enrich you all, and make you happy."

He ended—and a loud assenting cheer
Rose from the motely multitude around,
That o'er the island echoed far and near,
And frightened all the sea fowl with the sound ;
The men their night-caps and south-westerns queer
Waved round their heads, and capered on the
ground,
The old wives tossed in air their flannel " toys,"
Giggled the girls, and clapped their hands the boys.

To work the wizard went without delay,
Like one that doth his business understand,
And ere that you " Jack Robertson" could say,
By simply waving once or twice a wand,
And muttering something o'er a piece of clay,
Without an anvil, hammer, forge, or brand,
He fashioned forth an ample copper kettle
Ready for use, and of the finest metal.

Next to the wondering natives did he show
Of fermentation all the process nice—
A tedious process as distillers know,
But which he deftly managed in a trice.
Then on the fire he set the " still," when lo !
Forth from the vessel's lengthened orifice
There flowed a goodly liquor to the view,
Of finest flavour and celestial hue.

The foolish people tasted it, and found
It was a cordial worthy of desire,
For through the veins it made the blood to bound,
And warmed the stomach with a grateful fire ;

While in the brain, with all its organs crowned,
Such blissful fancies did the fumes inspire,
They thought themselves the happiest souls on earth,
And danced and shouted through excess of mirth.

Such witchery in the liquor seemed to be,
The natives now were seldom sober found;
From morn to eve they drank incessantly,
Till oft they could not walk upon the ground,
Or one another o'er their bottles see;
Then would they lie whole hours in sleep profound,
And when they woke at length with aching brain,
Like dogs they to their vomit flew again.

Sometimes they quarrelled and up rose to fight,
Fiercely resolved each others blood to shed,
And thumped and thrashed away with all their might,
Until their noses most profusely bled,
And with the cruel boxing, black as night,
Their eyes were almost hidden in their head;
While wives and bairns (no doubt the case was
trying)
Set up a hideous skirling and a crying.

There was a famous minstrel in the isle,
Minus a leg, through some marine mishap,
Who played the bagpipe in the finest style,
A comical and most amusing chap,
Him did the wizard with enchanting smile,
Into his power quite easily entrap;
For with the chanter ever in his mouth,
He needed something still to quench his "drouth."

So when the merry piper did begin
To play, and with his one foot thump the floor,

At every pause he sucked the liquor in,
And aye the more he blew he drank the more,
Till oft in midst of his melodious din,
As if some sudden cramp had seized him sore,
He'd drop the inflated bag upon the ground,
Which puffed its breath out with a squealing sound.

The wizard found him for his purpose fit,
And therefore took the piper in his pay,
Who now from house to house did nimbly flit
Upon his crutches whistling all the way ;
Then by the " blazing ingle " would he sit,
And keep the natives dancing night and day,
While round among them flowed the inspiring liquor
In broken-footed glass, and cup, and " bicker."

At length, so much they loved the wizard dire,
And his enchanting cup of mountain dew,
The cursed still was never off the fire
Sunday or Saturday the whole year through ;
More senseless than the brutes in fold or byre,
They made in whisky all the grain they grew,
So that most piteous was their situation,
Yclad in rags and bordering on starvation.

At this time lived a celebrated Knight,
Sir Torquil called, who roamed from place to place
Waging incessant warfare day and night
'Gaiust spirits that delude the human race ;
So puissant was his arm and skilled in fight,
He'd dare the fellest demon to his face,
And in a twinkling make him " cut his stick"
Down to the horrid dungeon of Old Nick.

So when the natives' lamentable state
Was first by fame loud bruited in his ear,
The generous knight felt indignation great
Boil in his breast—and shed for them a tear ;
Then buckling on his helmet and breast-plate,
He swore by heaven and his good sword he'd steer
Without delay for the enchanted isle
And punish that infernal wizard vile !

'Twas now the gay and gorgeous month of June,
In all its majesty and splendour proud ;
The songsters of the grove were all in tune,
And piped and whistled 'mong the branches loud,
Scarce pausing at the drowy hour of noon ;
While soaring high above the feathered crowd,
The lyric lark poured down his joyous ditty
To cheer his mate and callow younglings pretty.

In richest verdure blooming on the sight,
Were decked the fields with flowers of every hue,
With yellow buttercups and daisies white,
And lovely violets in garb of blue,
Which Flora tripping by on footstep light
In lavish handfuls from her basket threw,
Filling the air with thousand odours sweet,
'Mongst which the wild bee had a luscious treat.

And o'er the bosom of the halycon brine,
Whose angry billows now were charmed to rest,
The sea-fowl wheeling in the bright sunshine,
Their joy in rude discordant screams expressed,
The wild gull laughed—and from the burning line
To the bleak pole in snowy mantle dressed,
Each living creature with which earth is rife,
Seemed as inspired and glowing with new life.

'Twas in this charming season of the year,
The carnival of nature and the muse,
When seas are calm, and summer skies are clear,
Our knight set out on his adventurous cruise,
In a small yacht, provisioned with good cheer,
The fittest for his purpose he could choose,
And shaped his course in a north-west direction,
While all things round him wore a fair complexion.

The god of winds propitiously did smile,
And from his cave sent forth a friendly breeze,
Which wafted him along in finest style,
Its power increasing gently by degrees ;
And now the good knight safely reached the
isle,
And landed on the rugged beach with ease,
When he beheld the sorcerer advance,
Wrapt in his cloak, and knew the fiend at once.

With well feigned look of gladness in his face,
The wily wizard now approached the knight,
And strove to clasp him in a close embrace,
And in this way to captive him outright ;
But good Sir Torquil, by the power of grace,
Was proof 'gainst all his fascinating might,
And in an instant drew his trusty brand,
Which flashed like keenest lightning in his hand.

"Avaunt !" he cried, "thou cursed demon foul !
Thou treacherous spirit vile beyond compare !
Who by the sorcery of thy poisoned bowl,
Destroy'st thy wretched victims everywhere,
Ruining at once the body and the soul,
Whose breath, like pestilence, pollutes the air ;

For thy deserts, by heaven ! I'll make thee feel
The edge and weight of this avenging steel.

At this the wizard looked a little blue,
And tried again to circumvent the knight ;
But brave Sir Torquil, to his purpose true,
Attacked him instantly with all his might,
And with his matchless weapon pierced him
through,

When, like a fiery ball he took to flight,
And, as he fled, he uttered a loud shriek
That twenty good miles off was heard at Wick.

Now everywhere throughout the island round,
Sir Torquil searched, when, horrible to say,
A still at work in every house he found,
The natives drunk in middle of the day—
Some singing loud, and others snoring sound,
Upon the floor that like a gutter lay,
Which filled the knight with sorrow and surprise,
And once more made his kindling choler rise.

Then with his arm so vigorous and stout,
He smashed the pots in which the drink was
brewed,

And poured the ale and low wines all about;
And on the ground the malted barley strewed,
On which the porkers, with delighted snout,
And grunt that spoke their heart-felt gratitude,
Amplly regaled, until they too got jolly
And cut strange capers in their drunken folly.

And certes 'twas a most diverting sight,
And one might cure the sulkiest fit of spleen,

To see beneath the sky of June so bright,
The lean and bristly quadrupeds unclean,
Tumble along the ground, and squeak and bite,
With tusks like bodkins cruelly sharp I ween ;
At such a comic Bacchanalian rout,
Sir knight himself could scarce help laughing out.

Lastly, the piper's instrument he took,
And, with his sabre cut the bag quite through,
Whereat the piper like an aspen shook,
With doleful phiz and cheek of ashy hue ;
In short, most truly piteous was the look
That on the formidable knight he threw,
Exclaiming that he'd put him in a fever,
Destroyed his pipe, and ruined him for ever.

Meantime the natives gathering round the knight,
Brandished their sticks, and swore they'd knock him
down,

But soon were awed to meekness at the sight
Of his drawn sabre and commanding frown ;
Then while they stood agape, a sorry sight,
Much like the squalid rabble of a town,
Sir Torquil felt compassion touch his breast,
And thus the infatuated crowd addressed :—

“ Unhappy wretches ! much I grieve to say,
You've been deluded by yon demon vile,
Whom I have vanquished and expelled to-day,
With all his arts of sorcery and guile,
Ne'er to return again to lead astray,
I trust in heaven, the natives of this isle,
Who now, by sad experience I should think,
See cause to curse him and his hated drink.

With his rank poison brewed at first in hell,
Has not the fiend besotted all your brains ?
Ruined your health (if ye the truth would tell)
And filled your bodies with unnumbered pains ;
Nay, thrown around you such a horrid spell,
Aided by that vile piper's squeaking strains,
That you have lost all feeling of propriety,
And all regard for virtue and sobriety.

Now, if your senses you'd once more regain,
And be as happy as you were before
That graceless wizard with his hellish train
Of black enchantments visited your shore,
You must from smuggling totally abstain,
And all your tippling practices give o'er,
And, above all 'tis an essential matter—
Restrict yourselves entirely unto water.

Which is the purest liquid in creation,
The primal beverage ordained by heaven,—
Flowing quite free in every clime and nation,—
The first to Adam and his consort given,
Ere the frail pair were guilty of transgression,
And from their paradise of bliss were driven ;
So 'twas man's drink in times of great antiquity
Before the world had lapsed into iniquity.

As for its virtues 'tis enough to say,
It keeps the brain and intellect quite clear,
And all the functions too in healthful play,
Like to a good machine from year to year,
So that, with age until your heads grow grey,
No rising qualm of sickness you need fear,
While you may laugh at doctors and their drugs,
As all a set of exquisite humbugs.

Thus spoke the knight, and the repentant crowd,
Struck with the truth and force of what he said,
Wept tears of sorrow and confessed aloud,
That by the infernal sprite they'd been betrayed,
But, having seen their error, they avowed,
With the Almighty's sovereign grace and aid,
They would no more engage in distillation,
But lead a life of thorough reformation.

His mission o'er—Sir Torquil home did hie
In his light bark careering o'er the deep,
For now the sun was posting down the sky
In ocean's bed to take his nightly sleep.
Meantime the moon uprose, with radiant eye,
Her stated watch o'er sea and land to keep,
And walked her course in heaven with matchless
 grace,
And virgin sweetness breathing from her face.

HELEN OF BRAEMORE.



HELEN OF BRAEMORE.

'Tis summer eve—the setting sun goes down,
Gilding yon mountains desolate and brown,
That giant-like in naked grandeur soar
Above thy sweet secluded glen, Braemore !
Lo ! in the midst, uprising like a cone,
Stands the proud Pap, fantastic and alone.
With long dark belt, magnificent and high,
The shadowy Scaraben is swelling nigh ;
While o'er the whole in eminence and height,
Majestic Morven towers upon the sight,
Cap'd with the cloud that—beauteous to behold—
Looks like a glittering diadem of gold.

The happy lark that carolled all the day
O'er mead and moor, hath sung his latest lay,
And the gay linnet, too, hath hushed the note
That flowed so sweetly from his little throat ;
But from the moorland waste, the plover's wail
And curlew's lonely cry are on the gale,
Blent with the snipe's peculiar bleating sound,
And wild bee's dreamy murmur floating round.

But who is she that at the close of day
Trips o'er the greensward like a “ vision gay,”

To meet her lover in the gloaming bright,
Her youthful features beaming with delight?
'Tis Helen Gunn, the beauty of Braemore,
Whose fame hath gone to many a distant shore.
Fain would the muse pourtray that lovely maid,
In nature's own simplicity arrayed.
Her native highland plaid disposed with care,
Adorns the figure of the charming fair,
And falls around her in a graceful fold,
Clasped at the bosom with a brooch of gold.
The silken snood confines her raven hair,
That clusters richly round her forehead fair.
But who the sweetness of her face may speak?
The rose-like bloom upon her virgin cheek—
The large dark eye, so beautiful and bright,
Whose lustre fills the gazer with delight—
The oval countenance—the snow-white brow—
And honied lips where love sits smiling now.
And then her voice's music when she sung
Some touching ballad in her native tongue,
Flowed with a dulcet melody and swell,
That bound the ear in a delicious spell.

Like a sweet wild-flower blooming in the shade,
The Keith's rude Chieftain saw the lovely maid,
Her form, where grace and beauty seemed to vie,
At once attracted his licentious eye.
Inflamed with ardent passion, much he strove
From time to time to gain the lady's love ;
But still a deaf ear to his suit she turned,
And all his offers resolutely spurned.
So when he found that all his practised art
And flattery failed to touch the maiden's heart,
With wounded pride and keen resentment fired,
A dubious threat he uttered and retired.

Among the hills that tower so proudly up,
There lay a glen embosomed like a cup ;
A sweet romantic spot beyond compare,
Where oft the straggling wild deer made their lair ;
The mountain daisy and the heather bell,
Were thickly scattered o'er the fairy dell,
With many a bright and nameless flower beside,
That yearly budded there, and bloomed, and died.
In this secluded spot, when day was done,
Sat Helen and her lover Alick Gunn.
Her kinsman he, a sprightly youth and fair—
'Twas long since they in heart affianced were.
While yet but children sporting in the glen,
They seemed as destined for each other *then*.
Still hand in hand were seen the little pair,
Prattling together without thought or care.
They ne'er were separate ; and, on sunny days,
They played together on the broomy braes ;
Oft chased the painted butterfly and bee,
And laughed and shouted in their sportive glee.
And when, at length, a hardy stripling grown,
If Alick chanced to roam abroad alone,
The exulting boy would bring home with him still
For her the choicest berries of the hill,
Some moorfowl's eggs, or bunch of scented thyme,
With radiant wild flowers gathered in their prime
Along the lofty Scaraben and Pap,
And lay the treasure in his favourite's lap.
Their love grew stronger as they grew in years,
Without that passion's jealousies and fears,
For life as yet was all a happy dream
Radiant with fancy's first and brightest beam ;
While hope still pointed with a smile of joy
To years of future bliss without alloy.

In Corriechoich's romantic bosom fair,
At early gloaming sat the youthful pair.
Whate'er the cause, on Alick's manly brow
A cloud of anxious thought seemed resting now,
And oft a struggling sigh escaped his breast,
That told how much his spirit was depressed.
The kindly maiden prayed the youth to tell
If aught distressed him, if he felt unwell.

" My dearest Helen, if I seem to be
More sad than wont, 'tis all for sake of thee.
'Tis said the Keith has offered thee his hand,
With all his wealth, and heritage, and land ;
And, though I scarce can doubt thy plighted faith,
To me the torturing thought is worse than death."

" My Alick, why thus needlessly cast down ?
Distrust me not, my heart is still thine own.
Oh ! I would sooner die than wed that man,
Who bears the name of a detested clan.
Thou dost remember ('tis a tale of woe
To make the heart sick, and the tears to flow)
How in the bloody chapel of St. Tayre
Our sires by them most foully butchered were.
No, no, the Keith need not excite thy fears,
Heaven is my witness, and these truthful tears !
I love him not ; his bride I ne'er shall be,
His suit is hateful as his race to me :
No one on earth shall wed me 'gainst my will,
The heart I gave thee once thou hast it still."

" And is thy young heart still my own ? O ! then,
I am to-night the happiest of men ;
I wronged thee Helen—but 'twas the excess
Of love too strong for language to express,

Yes, love the deepest and the most unfeigned,
With not one gross or selfish feeling stained—
'Twas love that gave these jealous fears their birth,
And dashed with shade my brightest dream on earth.
Then let me clasp thee once more to my breast,
Since all those anxious cares are laid to rest."

Before the lovers parted for the night,
Beneath the holy stars that burned so bright,
'Twas fixed that they within a month should wed ;
How oft they wished that long, long month were fled.

The moon is up, and beautiful and bright
Pours o'er the lonely glen a flood of light.
In dazzling masses piled against the sky,
The lofty mountains wear a look of joy :
The moorland stream is glancing in her rays,
And near at hand the honest watch-dog bays.
In yon ancestral hall are sounds of mirth,
Which seems to-night the happiest home on earth ;
For now, in all her beauty's bloom and pride,
The lovely Helen is become a bride.
The wine-cup circles round the guests to cheer,
The bagpipe's notes are thrilling on the ear,
And many a foot is tripping it with glee,
And all is gladness there and revelry.
There comes no thought of harm to cloud their joy,
" On with the dance" and fill the wine-cup high.

Among the guests, tho' blind and aged now,
None happier seemed that night than Evan Gow,
The grey-haired bard, who many a night before,
Had sung the joys and sorrows of Braemore.
Cheered with the mirth that did each breast inspire,

He caught a portion of his former fire,
And in a voice unbroken yet and strong,
Thus poured his rude extemporaneous song.

THE BARD'S SONG.

The harp that has rung with the strains of the fight,
Shall to beauty and love be devoted to-night ;
For the maiden is wed that we all did adore,
The pride of our valley, the flower of Braemore.

As the stately foxglove with its bright purple bell,
Outstrips all the flowers in the desert and dell,
So the sweet Helen Gunn, with her beauty so rare,
Excels all our maidens, the flower of our fair.

Her locks with the raven in darkness may vie,
And dark is the hue of her beautiful eye,
And sweet is her breath as the fragrance that flows
From our own native thyme, in the moorland that
grows.

Tho' here we are all full of joy and delight,
There are hearts in the glen that are breaking
to-night,
And many a sigh, from the sad bosom wrung,
Is heaving for Helen the charming and young.

The Keith, in the lowlands, that dastard abhorred,
For the loss of the maiden may brandish his sword ;
But we mind not his threats—let him come to
Braemore,
And we'll give him a taste of the Highland claymore.

May the choicest of blessings descend from above
On the gallant young man and his dear ladye love ;

And long may they flourish in beauty and pride,
Like the ash and the birch on yon green mountain
side.

There is a hireling band of armed men
With stealthy footsteps marching through the glen,
And at their head on fiery barb is seen
A fearless chief of dark and daring mien.
There is a wild impatience in his look,
That no impediment would seem to brook ;
His brow is knit—and oft his eye of fire
Flashes with fury and indignant ire.
In his stern visage one may clearly read
That man is bent upon some desperate deed.

What sudden sight arrests the eyes of all ?
That *gloomy* leader stalks into the hall :
Alone he enters there, without his band,
The ruthless falchion glittering in his hand.
At first the revellers in mute surprise
Survey the unbidden guest that damps their joys,
But rage soon takes possession of each breast,
And dread confusion reigns around the feast,
When Keith—'twas he himself—with daring brow,
Thus speaks the purpose of his visit now :
“ I come to claim this lady as my bride ;
Nay, frown not so—I will not be denied,—
But dare to thwart my will, and by the rood,
I'll make each craven here the eagle's food !”
“ Strike down the braggart !” was the general cry,
“ By heaven the treacherous Keith deserves to
die !”
Scarce said the words, when forth the chieftain
drew

A silver mounted horn, and quickly blew
A shrill and startling summons—at the call
His banded followers rush into the hall.
Instant ensues a fierce and bloody fray,
Too darkly wild and tragic to pourtray.
The clash of swords and shouts of men arise,
Mingled with women's wild heart-rending cries.
The gallant Gunns, tho' few, fight nobly all,
But, in the end, o'erpowered and butchered fall.
Among the rest, the bridegroom on the floor,
Pierced deep with wounds, lies weltering in his
gore.

But who may paint the anguish of the bride?
Ah, happier far, if she too then had died!
In frantic agony she tore her hair,
That fell dishevelled round her forehead fair,
And prayed to heaven to avenge this deed of blood,
And smite the ruthless murderers where they stood.
In vain she wept—in vain to heaven did pray,
Distracted, screaming, she is borne away
By the fell hands that laid her bridegroom low,
To drink on earth the bitterest cup of woe.

In tower of Ackergill, whose massy hold
Looks o'er yon noble bay—so grim and old—
The beauteous Helen weeps the hours away,
Her once dark ringlets are already grey.
The wretched captive, pale and woe begone,
And sick with suffering, makes her plaint to none;
But inly hopes that death will shortly close
Her life's dark span with all its nameless woes.
Her cell-like chamber has one narrow pane,
That fronts the blue and melancholy main;
The rays of heaven but faintly light the room,

And scarce a sound of gladness cheers the gloom.
From morn to night, within that chamber lone,
She only hears the wild, wild billow moan,
Or burst around her, with terrific roar,
When the storm visiteth that desert shore.
If to her sad and lonely couch she goes,
To seek a brief oblivion of her woes,
Her sleep is troubled—to her mental sight
Still busy fancy paints her wedding night,
And the wild tragedy seems acted o'er
With all its fearful horrors in Braemore.
The Keith still tried her widowed heart to gain,
His threats and blandishments were all in vain;
She turned from him with loathing and disgust,
Her heart was his that slumbered in the dust.

In this sad state of wretchedness and fear,
No eye to pity, and no voice to cheer—
Two months she now had spent, and day by day
The lonely mourner seemed to pine away,
Like a sweet flower that withers on the sight,
Nipt in the blossom by untimely blight;
So Helen sunk and faded to the tomb,
A virgin flower in brighter climes to bloom.

THE
LOST CHILD.

THE
LOST CHILD.

WHERE the proud Alps magnificently rise
With snow clad summits swelling to the skies,
In a deep glen which formed a sheltered nook,
Lulled by the murmurs of a mountain brook,
And screened half round with clustering foliage
 bright,
A rustic cottage peered upon the sight.

When summer, putting forth her magic powers,
Decked the fair valley with her wealth of flowers,
And filled the leafy branches all day long
With liquid music from the feathered throng,
It seemed a spot which poesy divine
Might well have chosen for her sweetest shrine.

With nature's glories round them and above,
Here dwelt a decent pair in wedded love,
Both peasants bred, inured to daily toil,
And proud of Switzerland—their native soil.
Happy they lived, although their means were small,
A little herd of cattle was their all,
Which the green valley and the mountain side
With choicest verdure everywhere supplied.
The husband tended through the day his charge,
Which o'er the grassy common fed at large ;
While his good helpmate—ne'er disposed to roam,
Minding her household labours—kept at home.

Within the cottage everything was seen
In fitting order, tidy, neat, and clean ;
And when the peasant sought his home at night,
He found it still look cheerful to his sight ;
His frugal board—the fruit of kindly care—
Furnished with simple but substantial fare ;
While on the hearth, as 'twere in joyous mood,
Crackled and blazed the ample log of wood.
But since, by heaven's all-wise decree 'tis fixed
That none shall drink the cup of joy unmixed,
So 'twill be seen our humble pair were not
Without some heavy trials in their lot.

Three children had they—one an idiot boy
Of eight years old—which greatly damped their joy ;
The second, though with powers of reason blessed,
Ne'er from his birth a sound of speech expressed ;
For he was dumb, and in that piteous state,
Which doth our kindest sympathies beget ;
The third—an infant toddling on the ground—
Had all his faculties entire and sound.

It chanced their mother, one bright summer day,
Had left them near the cottage out at play,
When from the hills an eagle sailing by,
Cast on the youngest child her piercing eye,
And swooping downwards, horrible to say !
In her fierce talons bore the babe away.

Surprise and fear disturbed the mother's breast,
When first her darling little boy she missed.
Where had he strayed ? She searched each spot
around,
But nowhere could her infant son be found.
But what perplexed her most, the idiot boy

Laughed, danced, and shouted with outrageous joy
While the poor child who, we have said, was dumb,
Seemed with the deepest terror overcome,
Strove to express by signs a bird that flies,
And pointed to the hills with streaming eyes.

The wretched mother, trembling with despair,]
Now wildly rung her hands and tore her hair,
"Ah, me!" she cried, "some cruel beast of prey,
'Tis past all doubt, has snatched my babe away;
And, oh! the maddening thought distracts my brain,
I ne'er shall see my lovely boy again."

A chamois hunter, with his gun and rod,
Was 'mong the hills that afternoon abroad;
Behind a rugged cliff with lichens grey,
Watching an eagle for some time he lay,
When he beheld the savage bird draw near,
With a young child that screamed aloud with fear,
Clutched 'neath her wings, and heavily alight,
Within her eyrie, on the craggy height.
Though all unpolished and untaught by art,
The gallant hunter had a feeling heart;
And he was shocked to think this child should be
Snatched from its home in happy infancy,—
And, on an Alpine cliff become the food
Of a wild eagle's fierce and ravenous brood;
For the poor parents too he deeply felt,
Who, doubtless, in some neighbouring cottage dwelt.
So the tried marksman, resolute and brave,
At once determined—if he could not save
The infant's life—to shoot the bird of prey,
And bear its victim's mangled corse away.
Poising his rifle then with steady aim,
Which, heretofore, had slaughtered countless game,

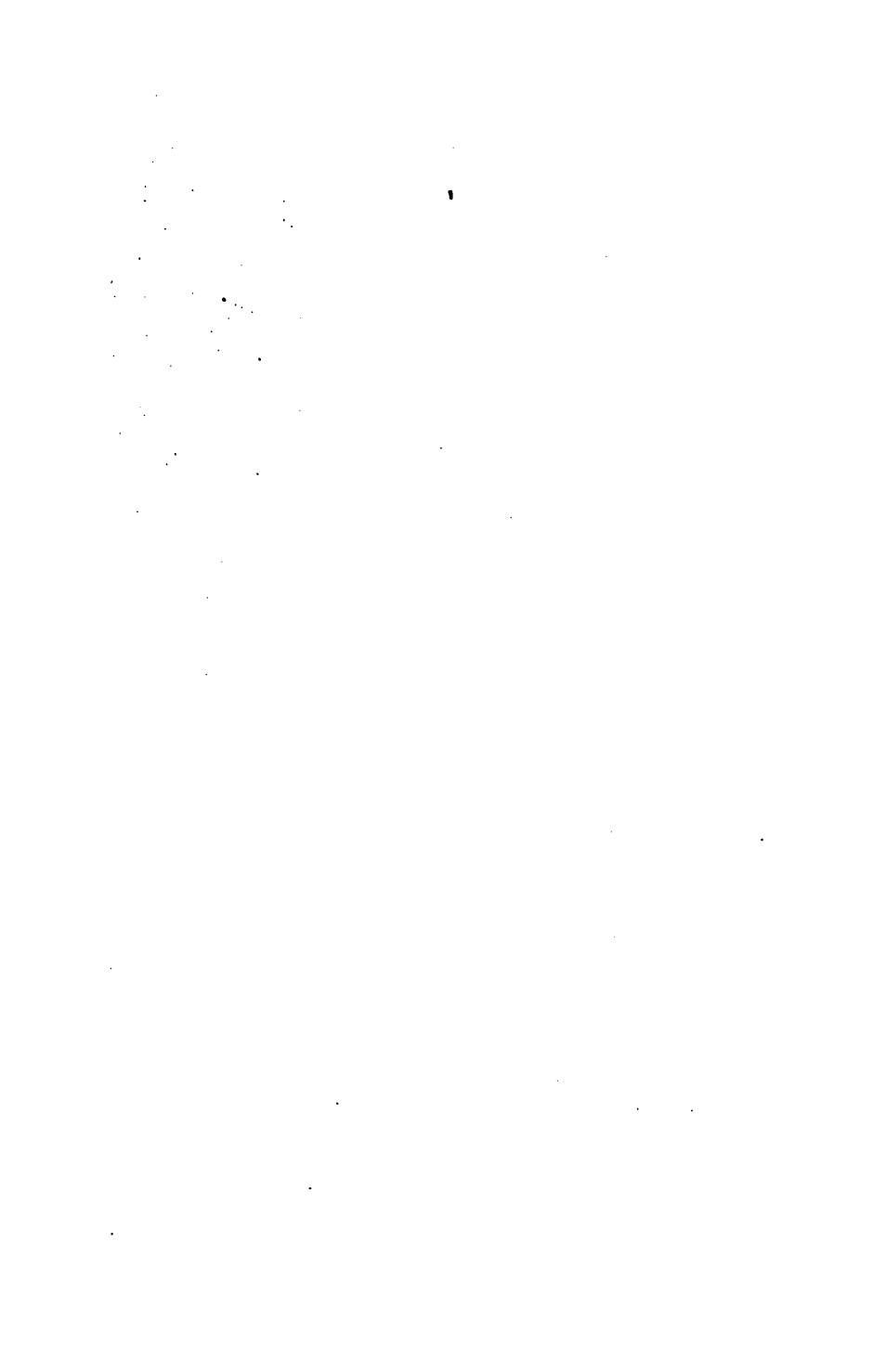
"God of the helpless! guide my hand," he prayed,
Then fired directly at the eagle's head.

Now, up the crag with beating heart he flew,
When, lo! he found to his delighted view
The eagle dead;—the child, though wounded sore
With the bird's talons and besmeared with gore,
Alive—and free from aught of vital harm,
For round the babe was heaven's protecting arm.
Soon time the parents, with unbounded joy,
Beheld again their lately missing boy.
The mother clasped her favourite to her breast—
His cheek and lips in ecstasy she kissed;
And o'er him as in tears of love she bent,
Pale as the marble she was seen to faint.

All were delighted save the idiot boy,
Who manifested not the smallest joy,
But on the infant gazed with sullen mien,
Like one that's stung with jealousy and spleen;
He thought his mother loved the little child
More than himself, and oftener on him smiled,
And hence his frantic merriment that day
The ruthless eagle carried him away.

The boy attained to manhood, and became
A herdsman like his sire of honest fame;
But the brave man who saved his life when young,
To him his heart with grateful feelings clung;
And when the hunter was grown old and weak,
With tottering step, and wasted frame and cheek,
And could no longer roam the mountains o'er
With his good rifle, as he did of yore,
All that old age required, to him he gave,
And smoothed his downward journey to the grave.

PAULINA VANDERSNOOKS.



PAULINA VANDERSNOOKS.

"THE course of true love never did run smooth,"
The saying's rather hackneyed, I admit;
But still, as it contains a deal of truth,
I think that I may aptly quote it yet,
Just as the text or moral of this story
Which, gentle reader, I now lay before you.

In Amsterdam, some fifty years ago,
There lived one Peter Vandersnooks by name,
A very worthy man, as one could know,
And eke a barber of distinguished fame,
Who had at shaving such a happy knack,
That none in Holland could touch him in fact.

He was no common scraper, you must mind,
And then his shop was quite a treat to see,
Stuck round with wigs and blocks of every kind,
And flashy prints in great variety,
Of herring busses, and of great sea fights,
And other very interesting sights.

Though bred a barber, he was not loquacious,
Or given, by any means, to idle talk ;
A very prudent man he was and cautious,
Alike in conversation and in walk—
Fond of his pipe, and of a glass of gin,
Both which, in *moderation*, are no sin.

In course of time, by industry and care,
Our tonsor did what some folks can do never,
He saved a deal of money, I declare,
And all by scraping chins—the man was clever,
So having made a fortune, as I've said,
He bade adieu unto the shaving trade,

And straightway bought a dashing country seat,
A stylish villa of two storeys high,
With ample porch and weather-cock complete,
All richly glowing with a yellow dye ;
In short, a house that, what with paint and plaster,
Might served a Baron or a Burgomaster.

He had a garden, too, that charmed the eye,
Containing a variety of flowers
And fruit trees, with a dial, by the bye,
Which, when the sun shone, pointed out the hours,
Besides a dovecot, and a small fish-pond,
Of which the Dutchman seemed exceeding fond.

His wife, I should have mentioned her before,
Was a magnificent and matchless woman
Of twenty stones—perhaps a little more—
A lump of flesh and blood somewhat uncommon,
Whose portly size seemed much increased by lots
(She wore no stays) of ample petticoats.

She stirred, of course, but little from her chair,
So much her corpulence did her encumber,
Twelve hours she spent in bed, devoid of care,
The rest she passed just in a sort of slumber ;
She took her victuals heartily and her noggin,
Her maiden name was Martha Mokelboggin.

Our couple lived quite happily, on the whole,
With only some slight bickerings now and then,
For Peter's vrow was a good natured soul,
And he himself the quietest of men ;
They had no family but an only daughter,
Who was a beauty of the finest water.

Paulina was indeed a charming creature,
Not tall, nor short, but of the middle size,
A perfect angel both in form and feature,
With bright round face, and roguish, laughing
eyes,
And feet that seemed as they were formed in China,
Such was the beautiful, divine Paulina.

Some wondered greatly at the lady's looks,
And 'twas a little strange, I must confess,
For both Mynheer and Mrs. Vandersnooks
Were much distinguished for their ugliness,
But then they had the greater credit, seeing
They were the parents of so fair a being.

Now, as a thing of course, you may suppose
Our young and fascinating heiress had
A countless host of lovers and of beaux,
The most of whom seemed positively mad,
So smitten were they with her cash and beauty,
And ready all to kiss her very shoe tie.

They formed, as I have said, a numerous list,
The tenth of whom I have not time to name,
There was Vansnish, the spruce tobacconist,
Vansnip the tailor, too, a knight of fame,
De Scamp, and Quirk, two clever writer chaps,
Though rather partial, both of them, to schnaps.

There was the poet, Mynheer Vanderclink,
The very first in Amsterdam they say,
Who spent a deal of paper and much ink
In writing sonnets to her every day ;
And there was also Mynheer Wodenblock,
The engineer, who built windmills like smoke.

And there was Derrick Higginbottom, too,
A gentleman connected with the taws,
Who all the mysteries of science knew,
And taught philosophy with much applause,
The author of an interesting book
On the beauties of the Dutch tongue, which "took."

In person he was somewhat lank and spare,
His age, I think, was forty-five at least ;
He wore, on gala days, a handsome pair
Of buckskin breeches, and a scarlet vest,
An ample broad-tailed tunic of sky-blue,
A wig, cocked hat, and formidable queue.

Now, Miss Paulina, though as fair's a rose,
Was a provoking damsel sure enough,
She joked and flirted with her numerous beaux,
But did not care for one of them a snuff ;
Her cruel heart seemed hardened against pity,
Which made some of them fly to Aquavitæ.

Among the suitors, I am glad to say,
The old folks most the dominie esteemed,
As being a steady person every way,
And one whose brain with boundless knowledge
teemed ;
And so they very warmly urged the beauty
To take the scholar—'twas her bounden duty.

But Miss, though in the main a duteous daughter,
Seemed not inclined to follow their advice ;
Marriage, she said, was an important matter,
A step that was both delicate and nice ;
Derrick, she granted, was a man of lore,
A decent, douce old chap, and nothing more.

But, to take him—she could not think of it,
She'd live an old maid all her life time rather ;
What signified his learning and his wit ?
He was a man that well might be her father ;
The very thought was just enough to kill her—
She would not have him with his weight of siller.

About this time to Amsterdam there came
A dancing-master all the way from France,
Monsieur Narcisse de Pirouette by name,
To teach the Dutch idea how to dance,
A dapper little fellow, smart and young,
With ample whiskers, and a power of tongue.

The ladies all were vastly taken with him,
He was so very handsome and so clever,
And showed such elasticity of limb,
As they in all their life had witnessed never.
And then, his bow, a thing that somewhat rare is,
Was quite enchanting and direct from Paris.

His poll was frizzled with the nicest care,
So were his whiskers, which were really grand,
And of themselves enough to charm the fair,
In any civilized and Christian land ;
And when he danced or tripped along the room,
He spread around him an intense perfume.

Upon his right hand finger next the little,
He wore a neat and very precious ring,
A present from the Countess De la Spittle,
Whose lovely daughters he had taught last spring ;
In short, he was a very killing manikin,
With goslin-green surtout and "breeks" of nankin.

The beautiful Paulina Vandersnooks
('Tis just as well to tell at once the truth),
Was greatly smitten with the dandy's looks,
And thought him quite an interesting youth ;
And he was no less charmed with the young lady,
And Peter's purse, which he deemed his already.

Now Peter, 'twas a prejudice no doubt—
Looked with contempt upon the whole French
race,
As being a set of Atheists all throughout,
And fond of frogs, without a spark of grace ;
But dancing-masters, chiefly of that nation,
The barber held in perfect detestation.

And, therefore, honest Peter could not bear
The very sight of Monsieur Pirouette,
Whom he regarded as a puppy rare,
The very greatest he had ever met—
Nay, half suspected that he was a blackguard,
And told young miss so, who looked rather awkward.

He told her further, in the self same breath,
That if she drew up with the worthless brat,
And then should marry him—as sure as death—
(And no one could find fault with him for that)
He'd look on her as an ungrateful "dyver,"
And cut her off without a single stiver.

Paulina with devout attention heard
The old boy's lecture ; and, when he was done,
Protested she had not the least regard
For Pirouette, or one beneath the sun ;
But really, after all, she said, she could not
Think him so bad a yeung chap, and she *would not*.

One night, soon after, about ten o'clock,
(I need not be particular 'bout the date)
It chanced that Peter, when he'd taen his smoke,
Surprised the lovers in a tête-a-tête,
Which, spite of his good nature and his caution,
Drove him at once into a desperate passion.

And snatching up a razor that lay near,
He thus the Frenchman valiantly addressed—
" Der Duyvel, Sir, the next time you come here,
To court my daughter and disturb my rest,
I'll shave your nose off, and your whiskers both ;
I will, by Jove ! you grasshopper, you moth ! "

" Pardonnez moi," screamed the dancing-master ;
" Out ! " Peter cried, and kicked him to the door,
And off the nimble Frenchman danced much faster
Than ever he did in his life before,
Leaving Paulina to her meditation,
Who wept, poor thing, a little with vexation.

News of the fracas very soon got out,
And caused a deal of laughing everywhere,
The young jades all set up a giggling shout,
And talked incessantly of the affair,
Which was to them a greater treat than honey,
And, of a truth, 'twas no doubt rather funny.

As for Paulina, you'll no doubt suppose
She took to bed with very grief and shame ;
Not so—our heroine was none of those
That yield to such,—she was a self-willed dame ;
So she determined, in a droll way rather,
To be revenged on her unfeeling father.

Time flew apace, as it has always done,
Sometimes with joy, and sometimes with vexation,
Which is the lot of all beneath the sun,
In every climate, and in every station ;
So I wont moralize more on the matter,
But just return unto the barber's daughter.

The affair which had created so much sport—
That 'twixt the Frenchman and her sire I mean,—
Had, like a breeze, blown over, and in short,
The thing was almost as it ne'er had been,
While other gossip, of a newer kind,
Engaged the attention of the *public mind*.

Thus matters stood, when one day just the bell
Was rung for breakfast, as you know's the case
In families that are regulated well,
But Miss Paulina did not show her face ;
The thing looked rather ominous and odd,
So Peter hastily to her chamber strode.

But what was his vexation and surprise
On entering it to find an empty bed,
No daughter there—could he believe his eyes?
He scratched, in dire perplexity, his head,
When, looking to the window, woe betide it!
He saw a ladder standing close beside it.

He swore, in Dutch, a very dreadful oath,
For now the truth flashed on his mind at once,
(It was no wonder that the man grew wroth)
The perverse vixen had set off to France;
She, who had been his darling and his pet,
Had just eloped with Monsieur Pirouette.

OCCASIONAL POEMS.



OCCASIONAL POEMS.

THE YOUNG SOLDIER.

In Reay his widowed mother dwelt,
He was her only hope and joy ;
But to the wars would Allan go
When scarce eighteen—a sprightly boy.

For he had seen, one market-day,
At Thurso, in the autumn tide,
A party of the Highland Watch*
Beat through the town in martial pride.

The music of the pipe and drum,
The scarlet coat and glancing brand,
Inspired the young enthusiast's breast,
And he enlisted in their band.

The route soon came, and he must leave
His Highland home so sweet and wild ;
His mother almost frantic grew
At thought of parting with her child.

* Forty-second Regiment.

And long his little sister begged
Her Allan not from them to part ;
And twined her arms around his neck,
And cried as she would break her heart.

But vain was all their deep distress,
And mingled tears—he dared not stay ;—
So with a boding sad farewell
He tore himself from them away.

'Twas spring—the gallant Watch embark
With other troops for Egypt's coast ;
And soon, near Alexandria's walls,
They put to flight the Gallic host.

The tumult of the strife was hushed ;
Among the dead that strewed the ground
Our youthful Highland soldier lay,
Sore struggling with a mortal wound.

The blood came trickling from his breast,
His fevered tongue was parched and dry ;
But he could get no water there,
And no kind loving face was nigh.

And now, when death was hovering round,
His brief career in arms to close,
The memory of his childhood's home
A moment on his mind arose.

The thought with anguish wrung his soul,—
The poor unhappy stripling sighed,
“ My mother, and my sister dear !”
Then stretched him on the sand and died.

TO THE SKY LARK.

Songster ! that risest with the dawn,
I love to hear thy raptured voice,
As mounting upwards on the wing
Thou bid'st the fields rejoice.

How wildly beautiful thy lay !
It tells of coming buds and flowers—
Of gorgeous summer's bright array—
Of sweet and sunny hours.

All sights and sounds which swell the heart,
With joy that grows almost to pain,
Delightful lyrist of the sky,
Are in thy thrilling strain.

Of happy days long, long ago,
Each liquid burst remindeth me,
When, warm with fancy's earliest glow,
I blithely sung like thee,—

Nor dreamt that life had aught of care—
Alas those happy days are flown ;
Yet still on nature's charms I dote—
Poet of heaven—sing on !

THE BROKEN HEART.

The spring was smiling from the sky,
And nature's breath came sweet and bland,
When Fanny left her native home,
To seek a foreign strand.

One long and lingering look she cast
On Caithness' dear, tho' rugged shore,
Which, something whispered to her heart
She never would see more.

In search of health 'neath milder skies,
She crossed the ocean, sad and pale;
Vain hope! death's shadow with her went—
Her's was a cureless ail.

Consumption's seal was on her cheek—
That fatal hectic spot was there—
Which, while it wears the hue of health,
Breathes nothing but despair.

With slow desponding step she roamed
Through many a fair scene day by day,
Where France extends her vine clad hills,
And laughing valleys gay.

Through Germany she wandered next—
The seat of fancy's wildest spells—
And gazed upon the storied Rhine,
And matchless Drachenfels.

Now Switzerland—romantic, proud—
'Mid lakes and mountains, throned on high,
Rose like a bright and wondrous dream
Upon her pensive eye.

Then Italy, before her spread
Her magic charms of every hue—
Her domes and monuments of old
And skies of sweetest blue.

But, ah ! those bright and beauteous scenes
To her no joy nor solace gave ;
She seemed as if she saw them not,
Her thoughts were in the grave.

As Autumn came with falling leaf,
She, like a sweet flower, withered fast,
Till wasted to a shade, was seen
Her fragile form at last.

She wore a locket at her breast,
The gift of one now dead and gone,
Which, next to God's own blessed book,
She loved to look upon.

That little gift, so dearly prized,
The love-born maiden, dying, pressed
Unto her young and broken heart—
Then calmly sunk to rest.

TO A WILD FLOWER.

Sweet flower ! amid this barren waste,
Where foot of man doth seldom stray,
How passing beautiful thou bloom'st
'Neath summer's kindly ray !

Far from thy thousand sister flowers,
That throng the fields and meadows green,
Like modest worth retired from view,
Thou blushest here unseen.

And yet, though hermit-like thou dwell'st
Where eye of beauty sees thee not,
Thou art not altogether lone,
Even in this desert spot.

The wild bee wandering o'er the moor
The heathbell's balmy dew to sip,
With sweet surprise arrests its wing,
To kiss thy honied lip.

The snipe, loud bleating from the marsh,
The plover with its plaintive lay,
And clamrous lapwing, wheeling nigh,
All round about thee stay.

And, lo! the gay and sprightly lark,
Whose song is heard the whole day through,
With gladness gushing from the cloud,
Is thy near neighbour, too.

Smile on, thou bright and lovely gem!
While summer's golden hours do last,
For thou wilt wither soon away,
Beneath the first wild blast.

How brief thy date—and yet, alas!
The fairest living form we see
Is but a fragile flower at best,
That quickly fades like thee.

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#### WINTER.

Lo! in his chariot of the stormy cloud,  
With snowy locks and darkly threatening eye,  
And many a wild blast howling round him loud,  
He comes the monarch of the polar sky.

As on he sweeps, destruction marks his path,  
For nought can his tremendous power withstand;  
He strips the leafy forest in his wrath,  
And flings the proud ship on the rocky strand.

The feathered songsters, 'mid the ravage wide,  
Have ceased their joyous carols everywhere;  
And summer's nurslings, the sweet flowers, have  
died,  
And all around is desolate and bare.

Still, winter in his milder moods can show  
A fairy prospect, beautiful and bright,  
When all the landscape, glittering round with snow,  
Looks like a new world garmented in white.

And he has nights more splendid oft than day,  
When come the stars in sparkling thousands forth,  
Or when yon wild eccentric meteors\* play,  
In rainbow glory streaming from the North.

And Christmas, too, is his with happy store  
Of kindly gifts, and hours of festive mirth,  
When friends do meet, as friends were wont of yore,  
And "Auld lang syne" is pledged around the  
hearth.

Then, welcome winter, with thy frowning skies  
And piercing blasts all dreaded as thou art—  
Since thou dost multiply our social joys,  
And for a season meliorate the heart.

\* The Aurora Borealis.

## THE ANGEL OF THE THUNDER-STORM.

My home is the big portentous cloud  
With its ensign of wrath unfurled,  
And I wrap myself in its dunnest shroud  
When I speak to the trembling world.

I speak in the east, and I speak in the west,  
Every clime is the same to me ;  
And I lift up my fearful voice o'er the breast  
Of the dark and the stormy sea.

I am heard by the high Cordilleras afar,  
That look down on a world below—  
By Hecla that burns 'neath the polar star,  
In his robe of eternal snow.

The beautiful birds are dumb with affright,  
And the beasts seek a covert profound,  
To hide themselves from the blasting light,  
With its lone and terrible sound.

And a gloomy veil of darkness is spread  
O'er the face of the mourning sky ;  
While the sun retires 'mid the gathering shade,  
At the glance of my piercing eye.

And well may nature turn pale at the sight,  
And mortals be filled with dread,  
For my flash, as it plays on the brow of night,  
Oft strikes in a moment dead.

I split the rock with my bolt of power,  
That long with the waves did cope ;  
And I rend the proud and the lofty tower  
From the base to the quivering top.

And, 'tis now, when my startling voice is hurled  
With a roar that may well appal,  
That I summon beneath me the prostrate world,  
To muse on the Author of all.

.....

#### THE GREEK MOURNER OF JERUSALEM.

Each day she duly visited the spot  
Where he reposed, the gentle and the brave,  
And there the mourner, wrapt in bitter thought,  
Would sit for hours beside his early grave.

O ! 'twas indeed a deeply touching sight,  
To see her brooding o'er her sorrow there,  
Grief's loveliest image—in the noonday light,  
So pale yet beautiful beyond compare.

And she had fondly planted round his tomb,  
With woman's delicate and graceful hand,  
The sweetest flowers of every hue that bloom  
In that once glorious and still holy land.

She was a Greek, and dwelt in Scio's isle,  
What time 'twas ravaged by the Moslem foe,  
And slaughter—rioting in blood the while—  
Turned that fair spot into a scene-of woe.

And when her kindred all, before her sight,  
Fell 'neath the vile oppressor's murderous blade,  
He whom she mourned, beheld her dismal plight,  
And, touched with pity, saved the lovely maid.

He won her heart—and she became his bride,  
A happy bride—but scarce one month had flown,  
When in Jerusalem her young lord died,  
And left her there all desolate and lone.

Henceforth she sank, abandoned to despair,  
And *now* not friendship's sympathies so kind,  
Nor all the hallowed scenes that round her were,  
Could soothe the hopeless anguish of her mind.

And still each day, in sunshine and in shade,  
Unto his grave the mourner came at noon,  
To weep in silence by that narrow bed,  
In which she hoped to rest beside him soon.



### SONG OF THE MERMAID.

In the superstitious creed of Caithness, it was the popular belief, that the Mermaid, before any remarkable battle, was occasionally seen sitting on a rock, singing a melancholy air, and washing a bloody shroud.

Now from storms the sky is free,  
Now the ocean's voice is bland ;  
But a cloud of war I see  
Brooding on yon foreign strand.

On it comes in gloomy guise,  
Fraught with peril and dismay,  
To the happiest isle that lies  
'Neath the blessed light of day.

But Britannia feels at ease,  
Nought disturbs her, nought appals,  
While her gallant tars she sees,  
Crowding to her wooden walls.

With her trident in her hand,  
Fearless of the threatened blow,  
She from off her freedom's strand  
Hurls defiance at the foe.

Who is he that now doth haste  
To the rescue o'er the wave?  
Nelson of the dauntless breast—  
Nelson, bravest of the brave.

With his country's banner bright  
Like a "fabled god of war,"  
On he rushes to the fight  
Of immortal Trafalgar.

But while victory shouts his name,  
While fresh laurels wait his brow,  
On the crimson deck of fame  
Falls the glorious hero now.

He shall tread that deck no more,  
Where he wielded England's might;  
See! his shroud is steeped in gore,  
Let me strive to wash it white.

Fallen in victory's proudest day,  
Sad, yet bright his doom appears ;  
He shall rest with honoured clay—  
He shall have a nation's tears.

And the gallant hearts that lie  
In the womb of ocean deep,  
Where is heard no battle cry,  
Oh ! how soundly they shall sleep.

I will guard their hallowed rest,  
In my dwelling, 'neath the wave,  
And when moonlight gilds its breast,  
Sing the requiem of the brave.

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#### TO THE RAINBOW AFTER A STORM.

Thou lovely arch ! on which the eye  
Unsated lingers with delight,  
I hail thy presence on the sky  
In all its witchery of light ;  
Sweet 'mid the shower thy form appears,  
Like beauty smiling through her tears.

Thy base is resting on the sea,  
Which now a fairy hue displays—  
It takes a heaven-born glow from thee,  
And trembles with thy beauteous rays ;  
Like dreams that lit the troubled soul,  
Thy radiance gilds the waters' roll.

The fields are glittering at thy sight—  
The birds are singing from their bowers—  
The lark is thrilling with delight,  
As seraph-like to heaven he towers ;  
Around thee what a joyous scene,  
Creation wears a brighter green !

And see ! how glorious from his place  
The sun is bursting there on high,  
Through clouds that late obscured his face,  
And dimmed his native majesty ;  
He comes triumphant on the sight,  
The "god of gladness" and of light.

Surely the spirit that did lull  
Yon mighty tempest's wrath to rest,  
Came down with thee so beautiful,  
And still reposes on thy breast ;  
Which seems so holy, sweet, and fair,  
That nought but good may harbour there.

Iris of hope ! how bright to man  
Thou pointest still the promise given,—  
Unfolding in thy radiant span  
The primal covenant of heaven ;  
To earth a joyful herald thou,  
And full of love, celestial bow !

But, ah ! how fleeting, short, thy stay  
To our delighted wondering gaze ;  
Thou speedest like a dream away  
With all thy bright enchanting rays ;  
Now not a trace of thee I spy,  
Lost 'mid the dim ethereal sky.





Yet though 'tis fair unto the eye,  
And mortals leave it with a sigh,  
What is it? look upon the sky,  
Thou child of care!  
A thousand worlds more bright on high  
Are rolling there.

And in their pure celestial spheres,  
So sweet each shining orb appears,  
We think of souls that shed no tears,  
And heave no sighs,  
But live for ever void of fears,  
In endless joys.

Is this a dream? reflect how God  
Hath spread enjoyment—life, abroad  
On every spot of earth that's trod,  
And then confess,  
Each star that shines may be the abode  
Of happiness.

God! who from darkness first didst call  
The light that fills yon starry hall,  
Thou Great Artificer of all!  
On bended knee  
It well becometh us to fall  
And worship thee.

Father of Mercies! endless vast!  
Light of the present—future, past!  
We praise thy goodness that thou hast  
To mortals given  
The glorious hope—to dwell at last  
With Thee in heaven.

ON HEARING THE GREAT HIGHLAND  
BAGPIPE.

Old Scotia's wild romantic pipe!  
Long linked with many a stirring tale,  
I love to hear thy martial notes  
Come swelling on the gale.

What glorious deeds they bring to mind,  
That yet will wake the heroic lyre,  
Deeds that evince a Roman soul,  
And "more than Roman fire."

Pipe of a thousand battle fields,  
Thou music of the brave and free,  
The tameless spirit of the North  
Pours thrilling forth in thee.

Thy tones have roused the soldier's breast,  
And nerved his arm in days of yore,  
On ancient Egypt's sultry strand,  
And India's farthest shore.

On many a tented field of Spain  
Thy gathering notes have echoed too,  
And on the bloodiest field of all,  
The fearful Waterloo.

Pipe of the simple peasant—still,  
Through Caledonia's proud domains  
Thou cheerest the rustic cottage hearth  
With thy enlivening strains.

And in the far, far distant West,  
Where deep and pathless forests lower,  
Thou soothest the drooping exile's heart  
Through many a lonely hour.

Thy sounds that breathe of early home,  
Across the wild untrodden main,  
Bring to the wanderer's fancied view  
His highland hills again.

Pipe that inspirest heroic thoughts,  
While freedom guards my country dear,  
Still let thy swelling notes arise  
To greet the patriot's ear.

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### THE SPIRIT OF THE OCEAN'S SONG.

The winds have burst their prison caves,  
Where they slumbered many a day;  
And hark ! at their summons my own wild waves  
Are again at their wintry play.

They are dancing along the stormy shore  
In loud and reckless glee !  
And the sound of death is in their roar,  
But 'tis music and joy to me.

And aye, as the scowling tempest spreads,  
And the winds more fiercely blow,  
They are tossing the spray above their heads,  
Which drifteth around like snow.

And, O! how they lash the eternal rocks,  
In crowds from the Atlantic far ;  
Yet nobly these giants withstand their shocks  
Like veterans with many a scar.

But, alas! for the bark that is tossing now  
O'er my billows so wildly driven,  
When the night hath come with her pitchy brow,  
And there gleams not a star in heaven.

When the ocean is roaring around her loud,  
Uptorn by the desperate gale—  
And the startling crash of the thunder-cloud  
Makes the stoutest heart to quail.

That hapless bark—she cannot outlast  
The dangers that round her be ;  
And she sinks with her shivering crew aghast,  
In the trough of the dreadful sea.

But, O! how soundly the seamen sleep,  
Though the tempests around them rave,—  
Though their couch be the breast of the stormy deep,  
And their pillow the wild sea wave.

Roll on, roll on! ye may well be proud,  
My own everlasting waters!  
O'er thousands ye sweep, without coffin or shroud,  
Of earth's best sons and daughters.

The young—the beautiful have graves  
In your depths that were sounded never ;  
Then dash o'er them all with your proudest waves,  
But they will not be your's for ever!

## ON VISITING THE DEVERON.

Throned on an azure sky of nature's own,  
With scarce a cloud to stain the bright expanse,  
September's sun was shining mildly down  
On yellow fields that ripened 'neath his glance.

The forest birds had dropped their carols now,  
No more with thrilling note the lark uprose;  
But all around there beamed on nature's brow  
A look of calm enjoyment and repose.

To me the scene did like 'enchantment seem,  
Inured to stormy seas and rocks of night,  
As lovely Deveron's romantic stream  
In wooded beauty burst upon my sight.

I wandered on through deep umbrageous bowers,  
'Mong old ancestral trees of giant growth,  
And winding walks adorned with shrubs and flowers,  
That spoke their birth-place in the sunny south.

But, lo! outpeering from its sylvan screen,  
Coily concealed, as 'twere, from vulgar eye,  
Glen Alva, like a fairy haunt, is seen  
Reposing sweetly 'neath the stilly sky.

The airy bridge light arching o'er the tide—  
The sunshine streaming down with mellowed glow,  
The richly-wooded rocks on either side,  
Reflected gently in the stream below;

All form combined a bright and happy spot,  
The heart and fancy fitted to engage,  
Which not the dimming hand of time can blot,  
Or e'er efface from memory's living page.

Yet here, where solitude and sweet romance  
Have found a shrine and meet in holiest tie,  
A deed of blood was perpetrated once,  
To draw the tear from pity's sorrowing eye.

Yes, here, where innocence might dread no harm,  
What time the woods felt spring's enlivening  
breath,  
The vile seducer raised his murderous arm,  
And put his hapless victim unto death.\*

But musing in thy shade 'neath autumn's glow,  
Thou lovely spot, where virtue's self might dwell,  
The mind forgets the tragic tale of woe,  
Charmed with thy beauty's fascinating spell.

~~~~~

TO THE SPIRIT OF BURNS.

Lord of the Scottish lyre! though death
Has reft thee from this scene of ours,
Does not thy spirit oft descend,
And hover round its bowers?
Yes, sure it does—for dear to thee
Thy Scotia's weal must ever be.

* Several years ago a young woman was murdered in this romantic spot. The murderer immediately fled the country, and was never heard of afterwards.

Thou with thy country's lowly poor
Wert not ashamed to sympathise,
And in immortal numbers sing

 Their sorrows and their joys,
Oh! thine was the unrivalled lyre,
That glowed with nature's truest fire.

And thou wert full of love to all—
Even to the humblest flower of spring,
For thou did'st mourn the daisy's fate,
 As 'twere a living thing.
Which once more budding in thy lay,
Shall bloom and never feel decay.

The spirit of devotion pure
Breathes in thy cottar's hallowed strain,
And lifts our drooping thoughts to Him
 Who ever all doth reign,
The King of kings, whose gracious ear
Still hears the prayer that is sincere.

But, Oh! thou poet of the heart,
Whose fame shall last to latest days,
Sure beauty never lovelier shone
 Than in thy Doric lays;
How winning, sweet, beyond compare,
The village maiden's painted there.

Thy soul was independence self,
From every taint of meanness free;
Low, venal avarice met thy scorn,
 And vile hypocrisy,
That mocks with formal lip his God,
Writhed 'neath thy satire's powerful rod.

Illustrious bard ! thy brief career
Seemed like a fleeting meteor bright,
That gilds a moment's space the sky,
Then vanishes from sight ;
So passed thy brilliant mind away,
Freed from its prison house of clay.

Now, with the ever glorious band
Of genius, in the realms above,
Thou celebratest loud the theme
Of God's Redeeming love—
Wiped off each mortal stain and tear
That damped thy noble spirit here.

THE AGED ISRAELITE.

Scattered abroad in exile and disgrace,
Without a home these thousand years, O ! when
Shall our despised and persecuted race
Be gathered back to Israel's land again.

Land of my fathers ! wander where I may,
Thou'rt still in fancy present to my sight ;
I think of thee continually by day,
And on my couch I dream of thee by night.

O ! then methinks I greet with ravished eye
Those glorious scenes renowned in holy writ :
I see Mount Lebanon ascending high,
And Jordan near me flowing brightly yet.

But chief, on dear Jerusalem I gaze,
With love that burneth in my breast like fire,
Where he, the Psalmist sweet, in ancient days,
Unto Jehovah strung his sacred lyre.

God of my fathers! hear thy suppliant's cry!
 When all my woes and wanderings here shall
 cease,
 Grant me but this—to breathe my latest sigh
 In Judah's land, and there to rest in peace.

O! in that blessed soil let me be laid
 Among my brethren and my kindred dear,
 The sun of Jewry shining o'er my head,
 The palm-tree spreading in its beauty near.

An intense love of Palestine, which nothing can extinguish, forms a striking characteristic of the Jew. After having amassed a competency of wealth, and when drawing near the close of life, his great and last wish is to get to Jerusalem, in order to die there, and have his bones laid among those of his forefathers.

ON SEEING IN THE SOUTH ONE OF THOSE
 SMALL SHELLS CALLED "JOHN
 O'GROATS BUCKIES."

Gem of the North! how strongly thou
 Recallest to recollection now,
 That bleak and rugged shore,
 Round which the savage sea fowl cry,
 And battling in their fury nigh,
 The Pentland billows roar.

As in our garden walks and bowers,
 The daisy, amid brighter flowers,
 Her modest visage rears,
 So 'mong these shells from India's strand,
 So rare, and beautiful, and grand,
 Thy tiny form appears.

When summer sends its sunny gale,
The Nautilus on thee might sail,
 And sweet excursions make ;
And even the lady mermaid fair
With thee might well adorn her hair,
 Or put thee round her neck.

O ! wild the scene oft met thee once,
The breakers in their stormy dance—
 The music of the blast,
The toiling bark, and oft at night,
The northern streamers flashing bright—
 The dark cloud hurrying past.

Timid and shy, the heron grey,
At times would near thee watch his prey,
 And like a spectre stand ;
While tired of wing, the wild sea-mew
Would frequent come, and linger too,
 Upon thy shelly strand.

Now thou hast found a proud retreat
At last, in " Scotia's darling seat,"
 And learning's favourite bower,
Where science, the magician grand,
With beauty goeth hand in hand ;
 And wide extends their power.

ROSLIN.

A lovely spot ! on which the unwearied eye
Could gaze for hours 'neath summer's tranquil sky ;

Where nought of savage grandeur doth intrude,
But all is sweetness round and solitude.
Before me still in fancied vision bright
The scene arises with renewed delight.
I see the antique chapel, lone and grey,
Yet passing beautiful in its decay ;
The castle frowning on its rocky base,
Where dwelt the proud St. Clair of other days ;—
The wild, romantic, wooded vale ; and lo !
The blue Esk journeying by with quiet flow,
As it were pausing, oft with raptured look,
On many a silvan shade and fairy nook,
Till in its downward course along the glen,
It greets the classic bowers of Hawthornden,
Where he, the gentle poet* tuned his lay
Far from the crowded city many a day.
And sure, if poet ever found a spot
Where life's vain rankling cares might be forgot,
'Twas in this "vale of peace," where nature throws
O'er all the charm of undisturbed repose,
Save when the joyous songsters of the spring
Make the wild woodlands with their music ring.
Oh ! 'tis refreshing in these woods to stray
Far from the city's noxious breath away,
And 'mid the golden sunshine to inhale
The breeze that wanders o'er this happy vale
With balmy fragrance—like a cordial given
A draught of health unto the soul from heaven.
Romantic Roslin ! 'mid thy beechen bowers,
Thy thousand bloomy shrubs and sweet wild flowers,
One day of perfect happiness I spent
Beneath the blue unclouded firmament,

* Drummond.

'Twas like a dream of joy that fadeth fast,
Gorgeous with fancy's colouring. 'Tis past,
And thee again I never more may view,
Loveliest of Scotland's lovely scenes, adieu.

A NIGHT VISION.

As I lay on my couch in that desolate mood,
When the soul 'neath its burden of grief is subdued,
In that stupor of mind, all exhausted and weak,
When the eyelid is dry, tho' the heart still is sick,
I sunk into slumber—my dream was of heaven—
For my mother, that died, to my fond sight was
given.

A burst as of sunshine came o'er me at once,
And I wept with a joy overpowering, intense,
As I gazed on her form, so ineffably bright,
Like an angel's all radiant in beauty and light.
By the splendour that circled her person, she seemed
'Mong the blessed above, now a spirit redeemed ;
For the robe that she wore was transcendently
white,

Too glorious for one but a spirit of light ;
And so spotless it shone, with a fragrance like balm,
As if washed it had been in the "blood of the Lamb."
No expression of sorrow or grief you could trace
In the heaven-beaming air of that beautiful face ;
But a calm of enjoyment was spread o'er her mien,
Such as man never felt in this sorrowful scene.
The bloom on her cheek, with its delicate hue,
Was more fair than the rose, when refreshed by
the dew ;

For she seemed, when relieved from this prison of
strife,

To have duly been bathed in the "river of life."
The mild look she gave, lulled each passion to rest,
And her smile was as that of an infant at breast—
So benignant and pure did it beam on the sight,
While nothing of earth was immixed with its light,
Save a tear drop of pity—the efflux of love,
Which even seraphs might shed in the mansions
above.

"O mother!" I cried, "do I see thee again?"
But the joy that I felt was now turned into pain,
For the vision that hovered before me the while
Disappeared from my sight with a ravishing smile,
Like the glorious rainbow that fades in the sky,
And I woke from my dream with a sorrowful sigh.

MACROARY, THE GREAT PREACHER.

Such sheets of fire, such claps of horrid thunder,
Such groans of roaring winds have ne'er been known.
SHAK. KING LEAR.

Among the brightest of our young divines,
The great Macroary like a bonfire shines;
Bold and intrepid in the sacred cause,
He roars aloud with wonderful applause.
No man of paper, or of method, he—
From all such trammels our divine is free;
These he esteems but vile restrictive rules,
Acquired in carnal theologic schools,
Not fit to rein a mind of spiritual mould
Like his, so daring and sublimely bold.

Behold the crowds that gather far and near,
This thundering oracle of *wrath* to hear,
When forth he comes, just mounted like Balaam,
But not to bless his hearers, but to d—— !
From every point his long-eared followers come,
Roused at the summons of his gospel drum.
Behold him now ascend the pulpit stair,
With burning zeal and sanctimonious air !
What lofty carriage in his front appears !
What looks of confidence our preacher wears !
First round the kirk he takes a knowing glance,
To view the *Ladies* and the *Saints* at once ;
Then ope's the volume of the sacred book,
With perked-up mouth and reverential look.
The psalm is sung—forth twangs a “ three mile
prayer,”

The Highland brogue is in perfection there ;—
At every cadence and lugubrious tone
The old wives utter a responsive groan.
This service past—our reverend preacher next
Turns o'er some chapters, and gives out his text ;
Then shuts the book with independent air,
As if his precious brain knew more than's there.
Now, every breath is hushed to silence mute,
To hear the bellowings of a matchless b——.
Fierce as he grows in Cameronian *wrath*,
He points the gentry to the downward path ;
Hurls them, poor souls ! to Satan's fearful pit,
And roasts the *Moderates* on his kitchen spit !
Now, may you see our potent preacher jump,
And thrash the desk with many a desperate thump.
Fierce and more fierce his awful visage grows—
Dark vengeance frowns upon his sable brows ;
Screws up his mouth, and curls his reverend snout,
Then ope's at once a perfect waterspout.

No mercy now, no Calvinistic grace
For Leghorn bonnets, bombasin, or lace ;
But chief, umbrellas being the " Devil's flags,"
Are d——, and torn to everlasting rags !
The chosen few behold the rising light
With gaping wonder and supreme delight ;
While carnal hearers list with much amaze,
As when a mule, or gipsy-jackass brays.
Amid the verbal carnage and the flurry,
Hovers the angry shade of Lindley Murray.
Now, in the end, this storm of rhetoric past,
The sole and only blessing comes at last,
Pronounced with drawl and Puritanic drivel,
The only clause that's free from hell and devil,
Oustrush the crowd—the few salute with pride
Their great high priest, extremely edified ;
While common sense still wonders at the brass
And marvellous lungs of such a marvellous ass.

NOTE.—The furious and hypocritical zealot, whose portrait has been attempted to be drawn in the above lines, got a government church, and was ultimately deposed by the General Assembly for gross immorality.

ODE TO SPRING.

Hail to thy gracious advent, hail !
Spirit of light and song how dear !
Again thou visitest the earth,
The drooping heart to cheer.

With joy unfeigned I bid thee hail,
When winter's piercing blasts are o'er,
How like a kindly friend thou com'st
To gladden us once more.

At thy approach, so full of love,
The flowers are thronging lawn and lea ;
And nature's happy songsters vie
In bursts of praise to thee.

The raging Pentland e'en hath smoothed
His hoary rugged ocean waves,
And rolls with calmer current now
Above his bed of graves.

No songs of birds are swelling there,
Yet at thy glad and glorious sight,
Methinks the wild untamed sea-mew
Screams louder with delight.

The hind is whistling by his team,
Childhood and youth are out at play,
Nay old age tottering to the door
Basks in thy blessed ray.

O ! what a kind physician thou,
Fraught with thy soft and balmy breeze,
Thou to the poor man bringest health
That's pining with disease.

Hope of the year ! I bid thee hail
Once more with all thy sunny hours,
Thy countless melodies of love,
Thy thousand blooming flowers.

ON THE DEATH OF THOMAS CAMPBELL.

The Bard of Hope, to sacred freedom dear,
The last and brightest of the glorious band
That charmed ere while with song the British ear
Has passed away into the silent land.

How high he soared on inspiration's wings ;
How thrilled his strains with true poetic fire,
As with a master's hand he swept the strings
Of his majestic and melodious lyre.

While England's speech from living lips doth flow,
While freemen tread her home amid the seas,
Her "meteor flag" in his proud verse shall glow,
Braving alike "the battle and the breeze."

Now, 'mong her great illustrious dead he lies,
As well beseems from vulgar clay apart ;
For heaven bestowed on him its noblest prize,
The poet's genius and the patriot's heart.

And yet, methinks, 'twere meeter that he lay
Within his own romantic Scottish land,
In some sweet spot from bustling life away,
Where wild deer roam, and towering mountains
stand.

He's gone ! the favourite of the lyric muse,
But hearts unborn shall feel his verse's spell,
Where hope and fancy blend their brightest hues ;
Shade of immortal Campbell, fare-thee-well !

ON SEEING QUEEN MARY'S TREE IN
THE GARDEN OF MORAY HOUSE,
CANONGATE, EDINBURGH.

Three centuries have nearly run their sand,
Thou royal tree that dost so fresh appear,
Since Mary Stuart, with her own fair hand,
In bloom of womanhood, first placed thee here.

She, the unfortunate and lovely queen,
So graced with beauty, intellect, and wit,
Has long since parted from this fleeting scene,
Whilst thou in all thy pride survivest yet.

And still thy rich leaves to the summer breeze
Thou yearly spread'st as in thy youthful prime,
Like to a queen among thy sister trees,
Unhurt by tempests, and untouched by time.

Thou standest, too, in a delightful nook,
Which, though amidst the crowded town, doth
seem
As full of solitude's divinest look,
As 'twere the picture of a poet's dream.

For one might wander here, with footstep slow,
Apart from vulgar strife and care for hours,
And muse on Mary's chequered tale of woe,
'Mid songs of birds and fragrance of sweet flowers.

Hadst thou a voice, thou venerable tree!
Full many a startling truth thou couldst unfold,
And tell of strange scenes witnessed here by thee,
And dark conspiracies in times of old.

The Regent Murray, specious and profound,
Who holds so proud a place on history's page,
Has often trod this garden's "cultured round,"
With kindred spirits of that stirring age.

How brightly now the sun doth on thee shine,
Thou pleasing monument of other days!
As if he prized that aged trunk of thine,
And loved to nurse it with his warmest rays.

Tree that awak'st for Mary's fate the sigh !
Long mayest thou spread thy tender foliage green,
A sweet and graceful relic to the eye
Of Scotland's beautiful, but hapless queen !

JOHN O' GROAT'S.

Hail to thy bleak and stormy strand !
Though kindlier nature cheers thee not,
Thy fame is known in every land,
Thou celebrated spot !

Pilgrims from many a clime afar—
From lands that lie beyond the sea—
Led by thy glowing polar star,
Have come and gazed on thee.

Thou hast no classic dome to show—
No hallowed fane, or sainted shrine ;
But ocean's wildest waves that flow,
And rudest rocks are thine.

Thy music is the Pentland's roar,
Loud bursting over rocks and sands—
Yon headland frowning on the shore,
Thy dome "not made with hands."

On thee no flaunting flowers appear,
Nor fragrant shrubs of southern sky ;
The lowly daisy blooming near
Is all that meets the eye.

But thou hast beauties of thine own ;—
When wintry storms have ceased to rave,
How glorious doth the sun go down
Within thy burning wave !

Then comes, with all its balmy power,
Thy summer twilight, long and bright ;
A holy stillness marks the hour,
That's breathless with delight.

Alas ! since first in life's young day
I saw thy bare and billowy shore,
Years, like a dream, have passed away,
And friends I see no more.

And early hopes that once were bright,
And fancies brighter still than they,
Like fleeting meteors of the night
Have faded, too, away.

Yet, though thou wakest oft times a sigh—
Though cold and bleak thou dost appear—
With all thy gloom of sea and sky,
Thou still to me art dear.

Yes ! in thy darkest wintry hour,
When storms sweep o'er thee from the pole,
Thy wild waves thundering in their power,
Give pleasure to the soul,



THE WIND.

Hark ! 'tis the first autumnal blast,
Reminding us that summer's past,
 With all its bright display,
When earth seemed carpeted with flowers,
And music charmed the fleeting hours,
 Throughout the livelong day.

It comes along the tranquil deep,
Rousing the billows from their sleep ;
 And in its dirge-like flow,
And wildly fitful hollow moan
That makes the trembling forest groan,
 There is a tale of woe.

It speaks of winter's stormy power—
Of many a dark and dismal hour,
 To pilgrims on the main,
Of corpses floating on the deep,
Of hearts that yearn for those and weep
 They ne'er shall meet again.

Nature's wild harp ! in every clime
Thy music, since the first of time,
 Has struck the pensive ear,
Now sighing with a gentle tone—
Now, sweeping in a tempest on,
 Through all its chords of fear.

How often with unearthly sound,
Like to a spirit's wailing round,
 Thou com'st at midnight hour,
Filling the soul when all is peace—
With thoughts of life's uncertain lease,
 And heaven's protecting power.

THE FEMALE MANIAC.

Yon hapless wanderer that hurried by,
With disordered step and unsettled eye—
She was once the queen of the maidens round,
With love's own image, and beauty crowned ;
And though wild and sad now the look she wears,
Her heart was as gay, and as light as theirs,
Ere the beam of reason was quenched in gloom,
And her young hopes crushed in their tender bloom.
She had pledged her affection in early youth
At the sacred altar of love and truth,
To one, whose attachment from childhood shewn,
Had turned still to her and to her alone,
But the ocean had proved her lover's grave—
And her dirge was sung by the stormy wave,
And the howling tempest that swept along
Had joined in concert that wild death song.
Still she dreams that her lover will one day come,
And she wonders what keeps him so long from home ;
Then the tears gush anew, and she sobs aloud ;
But a brighter fancy dispells the cloud
When she thinks of the happy meeting to be,
And she laughs at the thought with mysteric glee.
She stalks like a spectre along the shore,
When the storm is out, and the billows roar ;
And she heeds not the waters that round her dash,
Nor the thunder's peal, nor the lightning's flash ;
While she screams her wild ditty above the gale,
The love-lorn sorrows of some sad tale.
And oft all the livelong summer day,
When there's music in heaven, and all is gay,
And nature attired in her richest dress,
Blushes in beauty and loveliness,

She will sit on the verge of yon craggy steep
Watching each sail on the far off deep,
If perchance it may waft her lover to view,
Over that field of untrodden blue.
But he comes not, alas ! when the day is done,
And he meets not her gaze at the set of sun,
When he sinks in the sea in his bed of gold—
With a glory that never has yet been told—
And the gilded clouds of the western sky
Fling down their curtains so gorgeously.
And she roams at times o'er the midnight heath,
When all is silent and still as death ;
When the cold winter moon, as if pausing on high,
Looks pensively down from the deep blue sky,
And the thousand stars around her bright
Seem to sparkle through tears of living light.
Long hath she wandered, the child of woe,
Through this vale of sunshine and shade below ;
But there seems no rest for her wanderings here,
They will end in a brighter and purer sphere—
In a world—whence sorrow and care are driven,
Amid happy spirits, above in heaven.

TO THE AURORA BOREALIS, OR
NORTHERN LIGHTS.

Lo ! there ye speed along with rustling sound,
Waving your radiant pennons on the eye,
That like a thousand rainbows flash around,
And with their lustre glorify the sky.
Up to the cope of heaven ye dart your flight,
Like winged lightning bursting through all bars,
Dimming the pale moon with your startling light,
And, for a moment, blotting out the stars.

Now ye do seem (your forms so fancy reads)
As ye at joust or tournament did play,
Tilting along on your etherial steeds
Up the steep pole and down the milky way.

Hail to your beams ! they are a blessed light
To those that dwell on Greenland's icy shore,
When o'er them broods the long, long wintry night,
And cheering sunshine visits them no more.

O ! brightly too ye speak His wondrous power,
Who keeps alive those burning lamps on high,
And lights your radiance at the midnight hour,
Ye glorious meteors of the polar sky.

ON READING TASSO'S JERUSALEM
DELIVERED.

Immortal bard ! o'er thy romantic page,
With deeds of chivalry so dazzling bright,
Where marvels crowd and banded hosts engage,
I've spent some hours of exquisite delight :
When other eyes were sealed in slumber round,
By the lone taper, through the silent night,
I've trod with thee Judea's hallowed ground,
And gazed on many a glorious scene renowned.

How graphic is thy lay—before me still
I see the powers of Christendom come on,
To drive the Turk from holy Zion hill,
Under their leader Godfrey of Boulogne,
With many a famous Paladin and Peer,
Who oft in tented field and tourney shone—
Rinaldo, Tancred, Raimond—all are here,
With hermit Peter, that heroic seer.

And ever and anon bright scenes arise,
With which no earthly landscape may compare,
Here sweetly ope's beneath refulgent skies
Armida's garden, ravishingly fair;
Fades the enchanting picture, and behold!
Another scene of wonders passing rare,
In liveliest green yon spacious forest old
Starts up before you with its bridge of gold.

'Mid songs of birds, and syren voices sweet,
And stately trees and flowers of gorgeous dye,
Rich luscious manna dropping at his feet,
Rinaldo paces on with steady eye—
He fells the enchanted myrtle to the ground,
When lo! red lightnings flash out from the sky,
A thousand angry demons start around,
And thunders rattle with appalling sound.

But all in vain, the Prince of Darkness tries,
With many a hellish scheme and wily snare,
To baffle Godfrey's Christian enterprise—
Jehovah hears, at length, that leader's prayer;
The infidel is routed now with ease,
Recovered is the holy sepulchre,
And from the towers of Zion, Godfrey sees
Christ's sacred banner waving in the breeze.

LINES,

ON WITNESSING THE DEATH-BED OF A DEAR FRIEND.

I could not weep—though other eyes
Around me now were seen to melt—
The fountain of my tears was dry
Amid the burning grief I felt.

I hung in sorrow o'er the friend
That slept so sound—no more to wake—
And yet, I could not shed a tear,
Altho' my heart was like to break.

I thought on early youth—on all
The love for me that filled his breast,
While gazing on the lifeless form
Of him, who now had gone to rest.

Farewell, dear shade ! a few brief years,
And he who treads this mortal strand
Will wing his way to where thou art—
He'll meet thee in the spirit land.

LINES,

WRITTEN ON VISITING BUCHOLIE CASTLE.

On this bold rock, projecting here so steep,
Fearful and tottering o'er the rugged deep,
Bucholie Castle, wizzard-like appears,
The frightful ruin of a thousand years ;
Yet doth it frown, methinks, so stern the while,
As if its roofless and deserted pile
Could still defy fell time's resistless breath,
And the grim tempest with its sweep of death.
Wreck of departed years ! with thrilling dread,
We gaze on thee as on the ghastly dead—
So much thy form and desolation's gloom
Breathe forth the spirit of our mortal doom.
Within thy walls, so desolate and drear,
The rank weed now is all we meet with here—

And the long grass, that spreading thick around,
Waves to the night breeze with its whistling sound.
How sweet, yet sad, yon passing sunbeam falls
Around thy bare and melancholy walls!
Revealing all thy features of decay—
Thy gaps, that point at ruin's fearful day.
So on the maniac's pallid visage plays
The sudden smile, whose lustre but betrays
More sadly by its momentary glare,
The wreck of mind—the ruin that is there.
Where now are they that revelled in thy hall?
Thy proud proprietors?—departed all—
Yes, gone like shadows o'er the landscape's breast,
Nor stone, nor letter, marks their place of rest;
Whilst thou, a humbling monument to pride,
Still rear'st thy mouldering form above the tide.
O! what a dismal solitude is here,
How joyless—lifeless—melancholy—drear—
Amid the stillness of the scene profound,
You hear the blue wave only, murmuring round,
And the wild gull, that often wheeling nigh,
Shrieks to the ocean's treacherous lullaby!

THE CAST AWAY.

At noon, unto the rugged beach
They bore his cold and lifeless form,
Snatched from the rude and reckless tide,
The victim of the storm.

No funeral bell for him was tolled—
For him was shed no friendly tear—
For he was all unknown to them
That stood around his bier.

Remote, beside the sounding shore,
Where beetling cliffs o'erhang the wave,
They laid him in his "narrow house,"
A solitary grave.

Bu', though the Pentland thunders near,
Though sea-fowl scream around his head,
The noise will break his rest no more,
'Twill not disturb the dead.

No! he will sleep as soundly there,
Unmoved by aught on earth or sky,
As in the churchyard's hallowed ground,
Where kindred thousands lie.

At eve, the sun's departing ray
Will gild the spot across the wave,
And many a sweet wild-flower will bloom
Above the stranger's grave.

TO A ROBIN REDBREAST.

And thou seek'st refuge with me here,
Poor Robin! from the storm severe,
Now raging through the sky;
Thou'rt welcome to my humble cot,
Thy little crumb, I'll miss it not,
And nought shall thee annoy.

Cold blows without the bitter blast,
And snow and hail commingling fast,
Drive o'er the ravaged plain,
That late with many a wild flower gay
Smiled in the cheerful summer ray,
And woke thy blithest strain.

'Twas dire necessity, I fear,
And pressing want that urged thee here
To seek relief from me,
And yet, poor little harmless thing !
I'd sorry be to curb thy wing,
Or injure aught of thee.

How soon each care of thine's forgot !
Thou tunest now thy little throat,
To thank me with a song ;
With what a silvery sweetness clear
Thou trill'st thy carol on the ear,
As winter howls along.

Sweet songster ! would I were like thee,
As happy, innocent, and free
From every bitter care ;
Oh ! that my breast were pure as thine
In sight of heaven—then would be mine
A peace beyond compare.

LINES ON SPAIN,

OCCASIONED BY THE FAILURE OF THE RISING UNDER
MINA AND VALDEZ IN 1830.

Heard'st thou yon mighty shout, O Spain !
That burst o'er continent and main,
When France uprose with proud disdain,
Like ocean's waves,
And dashed to earth the hated chain
Was forged for slaves ?

Like thunder borne upon the breeze,
Or winter's roar amid the seas,
Did it not cross the Pyrenees
And call to thee
To rise with all thy energies
And shake thee free.

It did,—thou heard'st the electric call
O'er mount, and tower, and prison wall;
But did'st thou rise? One move was all
Thou mad'st with pain,
And prostrate down again did'st fall
To hug thy chain.

O shame!—degenerate Spain—to thee,
Land of the sun and olive tree—
Land of bright deeds and chivalry,
And *British graves*!
God never meant thee, sure, to be
A land of slaves.

Hast thou forgot thy patriot flame
At Saragossa? O! that name
Might be to thee, with one acclaim,
A watch-word given
To rouse thee to a deed of fame—
Like voice from heaven.

Hast thou forgot all this, O Spain!
And more, on many a battle plain?
Then yield thee tamely to thy chain
And slavery's thrall,
And crouch beneath a bigot's reign.
Like Portugal.*

* Don Miguel had at this time usurped the throne of Portugal.

THE GRAVES OF THE MARINERS.

[About a hundred years ago, a large ship was driven by a tempest on Skirza Head in Caithness, when all hands perished except the cabin boy, who escaped, it is said, in a very remarkable manner, by jumping from the mast, the moment the vessel struck, on a jutting ledge of rock in the face of the precipice, from which perilous situation he was extricated by means of a rope. The bodies of the unfortunate crew were afterwards washed ashore, and buried on the very summit of the head-land. A few stones, now mostly covered over with moss and lichens, still indicate this extraordinary sepulture.]

On the dread verge of this impending steep,
Soundly at last the shipwrecked strangers sleep;
Yes—they sleep sound above the eternal waves,
Whose voice oft bursts in thunder round their graves.
Alas! nor line, nor epitaph is here,
To mark their memory to the wanderer near,
But all unknown, “forgetting and forgot,”
They slumber on in this deserted spot,
Where darkly frowns the promontory rude,
Sacred to horror and to solitude!
Remote even here from kindred dead they lie,
Outcasts, as ’twere, from all humanity—
Where never parent sorrowed o’er their bier,
Nor friendship shed for them a single tear—
Nor love-lorn beauty, frantic with distress,
Poured o’er their sod her widowed wretchedness.
Yet doth November with her visage pale,
Sigh their sad requiem on the hollow gale,
And the dark storm that sweeps along the heath,
Howls as in pity round their bed of death.
O! ’tis a fearful cemetery sublime,
To make one pause and meditate on time,
Wild as it hangs above the ocean nigh,
That bursts around you like eternity!

Tremendous Skirza ! round thy dizzy head,
Thy beetling brow, that sepulchres the dead,
No joyful sound—no living voice we hear,
Save the loud screaming of the sea-bird near,
That harshly mingles with the breaker's roar,
Along thy bleak and melancholy shore.
Now summer pours around thy rugged height,
One glorious burst of ever-cheering light ;
Yet bare and naked in the solar ray,
Thou rear'st thy savage precipices grey,
Save where some rock-flower, beautiful and sweet,
Smiles mid the horrors of its wild retreat.

THE SOLDIER LOVER—A BALLAD.

There dwelt beside the classic Rhine,
A Baron bold, in days of yore ;
His castle it was huge and strong ;
And great and dreaded was his power.

In rude barbaric pomp he lived—
From all restraints of conscience free ;
A thousand serfs were at his nod,
A proud, despotic man was he.

He had an only daughter fair,
In youthful beauty's bloom arrayed ;
The circling sun ne'er shone upon
A lovelier or a gentler maid.

Her face all sweetness did appear—
Her soft locks wore a sunny hue,
And then her melting eye was like
" The summer heaven's delicious blue."

And she had many a suitor rich,
That strove her gentle hand to gain ;
The proudest nobles in the land,
They wooed her, but they wooed in vain.

She would not listen to their suit,
Tho' urged incessant e'en and morn,
Their lands and riches she despised—
Their proffered gifts she held in scorn.

There to the castle came a youth—
A comely youth, I wot, was he ;
He dearly loved the blooming maid,
And she loved him as tenderly.

But, when the Baron heard of it,
His wrath grew like the raging main ;
He thrust the youth out of his hall,
And bade him ne'er come there again.

In silent woe and deep despair,
For now life's charm had passed away,
The love-sick maiden inly mourned,
And sadly drooped from day to day.

Her bright eye dimmed—her spirit fled—
The rose and lily left her cheek ;
And " like the second bow she paled,"
For, oh ! her widowed heart was sick.

Sore grieved the Baron now, that he
Had ever crossed his daughter's love ;
And much he strove to comfort her,
But nought her sorrow could remove.

The youth departed to the wars,
In busy strife his grief to drown ;
He fought on many a battle field,
And grew a soldier of renown.

And when the " red campaign was o'er,"
He sought the Baron's home again ;
He found the dear maid living still,
But lingering out a life of pain.

Oh ! what a meeting now was their's—
Their bosoms beat with transports high ;
They sunk into each others arms,
And tears were mingled with their joy.

The old man, too, he with them wept—
The long, long wished for knot was tied ;
They were a fond and happy pair—
The gallant soldier and his bride.

LEGEND OF ST. MAGNUS.

Among the thousand famous saints that grace
The Romish calendar so very bright,
St. Magnus holds a most distinguished place,
Who in his day was quite a shining light,
And greatly celebrated for his piety,
And, what was rare, 'mong Northern saints—
sobriety.

He lived in Orkney in the *good* old times
When the gay " Scarlet Lady" ruled the *roust*,
And folk got absolution for their crimes,
And sins of all kinds at a trifling cost—
When all was unity without confusion,
Or any jarring about Non-intrusion.

Our saint made once a pilgrimage to Rome
(Such jaunts were very common once you know)
To worship in St. Peter's marble dome,
And kiss respectfully the Pope's big toe—
I mean the great head of the Romish church,
Which, now-a-days, is sadly left in lurch.

The Pope received St. Magnus with much favour,
And kindly offered him his toe to kiss,
Which Magnus did, first throwing off his beaver,
And humbly kneeling down, as you may guess,
Before the footstool of the holy father,
Or "Man of Sin," as you would term him rather.

His holiness was glad to understand
That church affairs in Orkney throve so well,
Which, not long since, was quite a heathenish land,
Without a chapel, crucifix, or bell—
Sunk to the eyes in pagan superstition,
And, without roads too—what a sad condition.

He hoped, he said, there would be no declension
Of zeal on part of Magnus and his friends,
To further still the cause of church extension,
And spiritual independence with the teinds;
And then the Pope, in priestly style of diction,
Dismissed St. Magnus with his benediction.

Our pilgrim now pursued his homeward route,
With the Pope's blessing to cheer up his thoughts,
Travelling as cheaply as he could no doubt,
Until he came, at length, to John O' Groat's;
When straight he asked the boatman of the ferry
To cross him over for an Ave Mary.

Old Benjie eyed him with a knowing stare,
And said his prayers were no doubt very good,
But, proper for the soul although they were,
They for the belly could not furnish food,
So, if he would not pay his score—no matter,
He'd but to stop on this side of the water.

St. Magnus made no answer to this speech,
Which was delivered in a jibing tone,
But casting quick his eye around the beach,
He singled out a piece of red sand-stone;
Which, when he'd blessed and launched—the
worthy saint
Placed both feet on it, and away he went.

Away he went quite wonderful to see,
Straight for the haven of Burwick like a shot,
Flying along the waves most gallantly—
Although the firth was boiling like a pot;
And in ten minutes, spite of wind and tide,
Got safely landed on the Orkney side.

The natives, who had flocked towards the shore,
Held up their hands in huge astonishment;
And, more they gazed, they marvelled still the more,
At this miraculous passage of the saint—
Which, as a feat in way of navigation,
Beats all that ere was known since the creation.

The precious relic now was carried straight,
In grand procession to St. Mary's fane,
Where still it lies exciting wonder great,
With the saint's bare feet printed on it plain,
Which proves the truth of this amazing story,
So much redounding to St. Magnus' glory.

WINTER EVENING SKY.

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament
sheweth forth his handiwork."

Yes, there is marvellous light abroad
On yonder vaulted starry sky,
To mark the hand of Nature's God,
In all that strikes the wondering eye.

Oh ! it is glorious just to view
Yon calm delighted orb of night,
Now gliding through the concave blue,
And pouring round her silver light.

She walks majestic as a queen,
How beautiful beyond compare !
No cloud is passing o'er her mien—
No "herald of the storm" is there.

And see ! rejoicing in her light,
Like dew-drops on the matin plain—
Ten thousand stars are shining bright,
And sparkling in her lucid train.

Ages have gone, and empires past,
Since they were first suspended there ;
Yet still these living lamps do last,
And burn as beautiful and fair.

Say, are they worlds these gems of light,
Now twinkling through the midnight sky !
It is a glorious thought—how bright !
And leads to meditation high.

Yes ! there are worlds unnumbered here,
Hung up in night's resplendent hall,
For countless do the stars appear,
And boundless is the God of all.

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## NOTES.

"**THE SOLDIER'S BRIDE**," the leading poem in the volume, is founded on the following tragical occurrence. In 1612, Colonel George Sinclair, a native of Caithness-shire, and a soldier of fortune, embarked for Norway with a body of troops to assist Gustavus Adolphus, king of Sweden, in his war with Denmark. Sinclair landed at Romsdahl in Norway; and, in his march up the valley of Lessee, he and his men were surprised in a narrow pass by the peasantry, and cut to pieces, two or three only escaping to tell the mournful tale, among whom was his bride, who accompanied him in the expedition, and, as tradition reports, acquitted herself exactly as represented in the poem.

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"**THE ENCHANTED ISLAND.**" The island of Stroms, in the Pentland Firth, was a few years ago notorious for illicit distillation. After many fruitless attempts to put down this demoralizing traffic, it was at length finally suppressed by an active officer of Excise from Ireland. The result, as might be expected, has been a happy improvement in the morals and manners of the inhabitants. The poem, though a jeu d'esprit, it is hoped, will be found to possess a good moral.

THE END.





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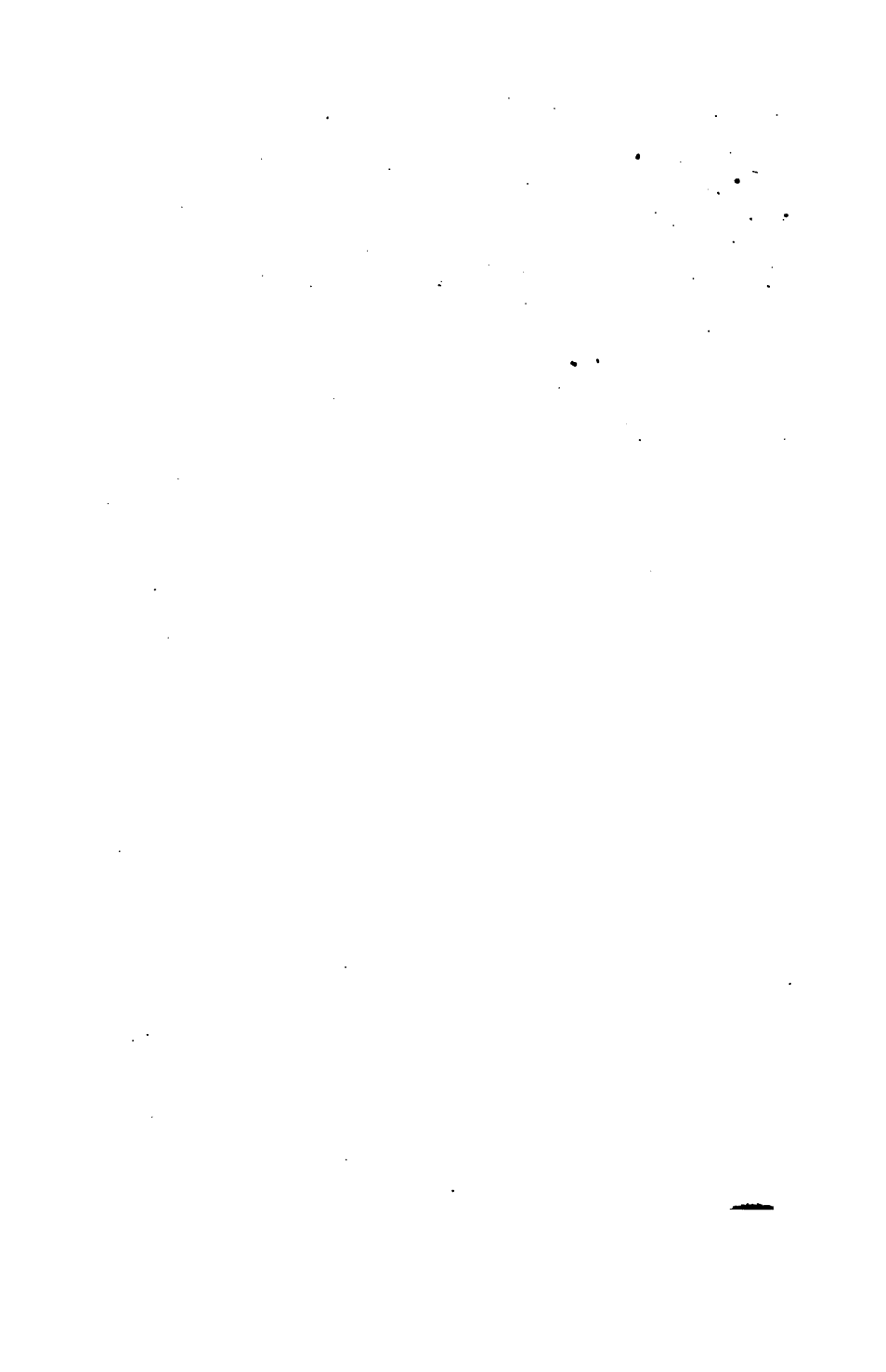
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